THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 48 **SPIDER-MAN** GO BEHIND THE SCENES OF THE ANIMATED SERIES

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#18

THE MYSTERY WALK #5
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Cover(s) by Chris Berkeley, Buzz
Full Color, 32 pgs

Part 5 of a six part Vampi universe poster by BUZZ

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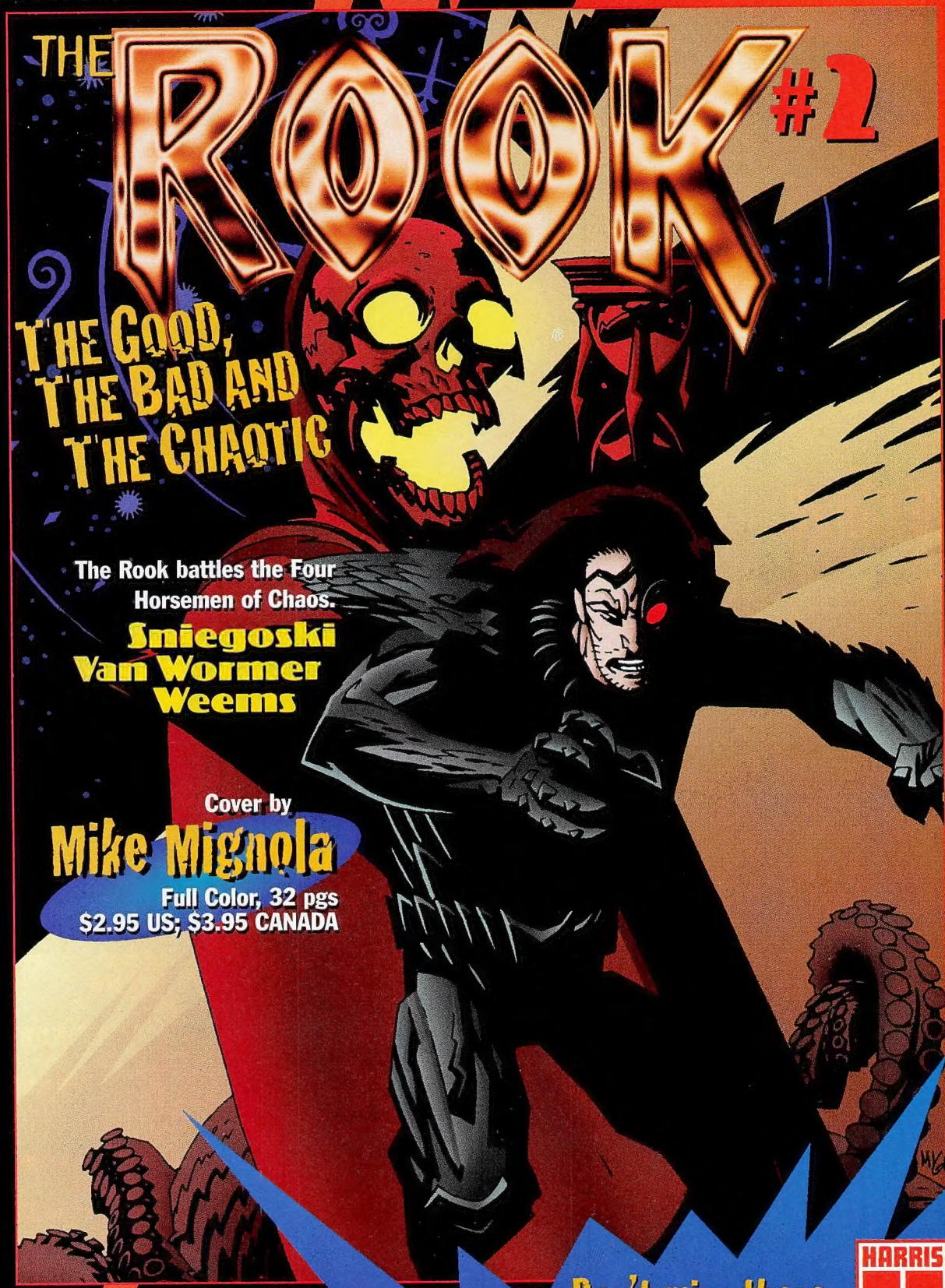

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HARRIS COMICS

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Number 48
AUGUST 1995

CONTENTS

features
irregulars

32 YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY?
A spotlight on the women behind the men (characters, that is) in comics. And we ain't talking sidekicks. By Beth Hannan Rimmels

38 LEARN FROM THE PROSE
Get the inside scoop on how to write comics, straight from the professionals. By Craig Shutt

74 FAVORITE SON
After struggling with his father's shadow, artist John Romita Jr. is finally getting his due. By Paul J. Grant

up close

46 A NEW SPIN
Take a sneak peek behind the scenes of the newest Spider-Man animated series. Sorry, Ms. Lion not included. By Marc Shapiro

52 BRUSH OFF
Inkers get no respect, and frankly, they're sick of it. Read about why. By Paul J. Grant

86 CASTING CALL 6
It's the Justice League's turn to go Hollywood. By the maniacal Wizard staff

92 SUMMER SLAUGHTER
Check out the real-life Evil Ernie, who just might be making a killing at a convention near you! By Marc Shapiro

contests

68 SPIDER-MAN
Get tons o' babes by winning original painted Spider-Man art! Hey, chicks go ga-ga for that kind of stuff.

84 GEN[13] BONANZA
Here's your chance to be a big shot by drawing yer very own Gen[13] cover!

110 ASH
Take a shot at winnin' a limited-edition, hand-painted resin statue of Joe Quesada's ass. Err...that's Ash.

exclusive offer
don't miss this one!

96 GET OVERPOWERED!
Get yer hands on a Wizard Press Exclusive! This month we're offering you a Marvel OverPower Metal Print featuring Spider-Man vs. Wolverine! Screw that Farrah Fawcett poster on yer wall—this baby's got it beat!

WOMEN IN COMICS AMAZONS AND MORE! PAGE 32

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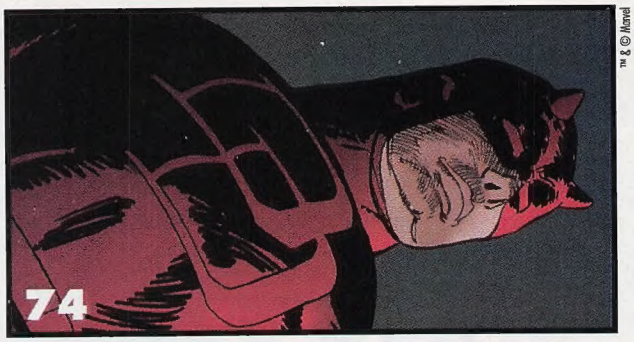

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EVIL ERNIE ™ & © Brian Pulido. Photo: Jim McHugh

departments

regulars

	PAGE
MAGIC WORDS	8
WIZARD NEWS	19
THE DRAWING BOARD	63
HOMEMADE HEROES	102
C.B.I.Q.	114
CARD PRICE GUIDE	123
COMIC WATCH/GOOD & CHEAP	129
PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT	130
TOP 10 COMICS	140
TOP 100	142
INTRO TO THE PRICE GUIDE	150
COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE	153
SHOWS & CONVENTIONS	212
BULLPEN	215
WIZARD PROFILE	216

WIN!

A HAND-PAINTED ASH STATUE!

He looks constipated now, but that's just the beginning. Get the skinny on page 110!

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columns

FROM THE TOP	6
KRASH COURSE	58
CUT & PRINT	70
TOYING AROUND	98
POWER UP!	104
PALMER'S PICKS	112
MANGA SCENE	116
WIZARD OF CARDS	120
MARKET WATCH	144
E.G.O.	214

from the top

WISHFUL THINKING

The only thing Jim Balent wanted to know was when he could draw beautiful women for the cover of *Wizard*. This month, his wish and mine came true. Tying into the cover is a feature that explores the evolution of female characters in comics—where they've been and where they're going.

Also in this issue, *Wizard* goes behind the scenes with the Spider-Man cartoon, lets you learn from the pros on how to write a comic, tells you what an inker does, and offers you a huge interview with one of my favorite artists, John Romita Jr.

And exclusives—we've got plenty of 'em! Check out our offer for a Marvel *OverPower* Metal print featuring Spidey and Wolverine. Make sure you don't miss out—you can only get it here. This is also the first in a series of three, culminating in our gala issue #50! Also, scope out the cool Lady Rawhide mini-comic from Topps Comics, which ties into her upcoming mini-series.

It's hard to believe it's summer already! Now that the season's upon us, there is so much happening in the world of comics. Lots of crossovers, lots of conventions and tons to read. I trust you'll let us know what *you're* doing.

And, hey—if you see me this summer at a convention, just try to challenge me to a game of *Magic: The Gathering*. Me and my White Weenie deck will let you have it! (Speaking of *Magic*, hope you're all reading *InQuest*, our magazine on the future of collectible card games. It's a fun read, so make sure you ask your local retailer for one, and tell him I sent you.)

See ya next month.

Gareb S. Shamus
The Big Cheese

P.S. Oh, and did I mention issue #50? Oh, I did? Then I won't have to tell you it will be a blockbuster issue and that you'll die when you see...oops. Almost let the cat out of the bag. (Whew. That was a close one.)

masthead

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Magic Words

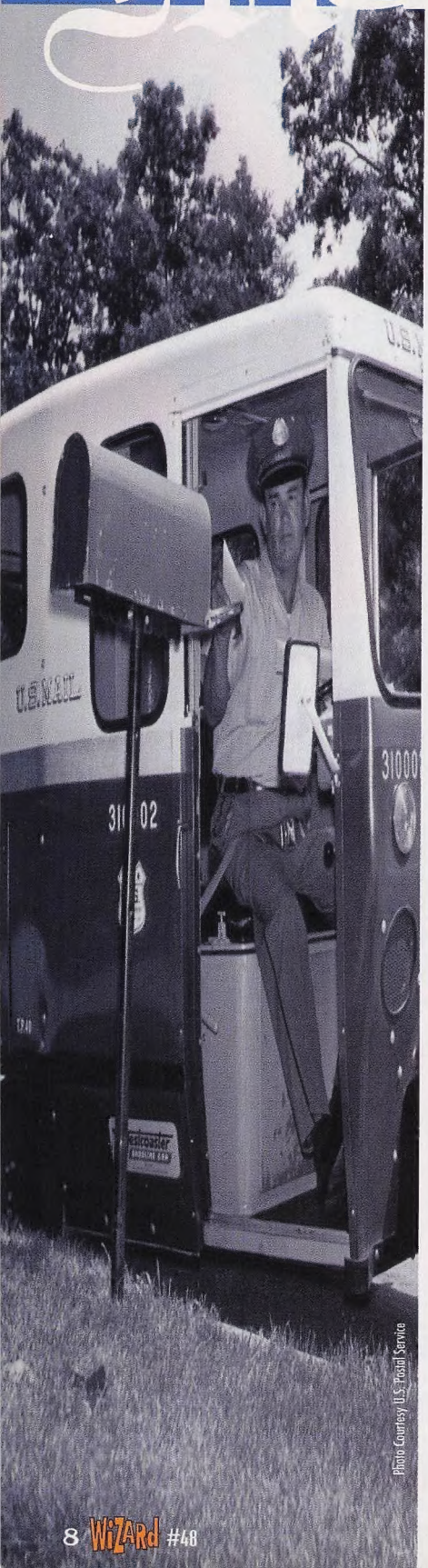

Photo Courtesy U.S. Postal Service

Duh

Let me start off by saying this: A lot of you guys out there in reader-land are pretty silly. There seem to be a number of people who don't quite understand a few letters page basics. Check this guy out, f'rinstance:

Dear All-Mighty, All-Powerful Wizardos,

What are those names and addresses under the letters in Magic Words?

Jeff Thongvichit
San Francisco, CA

Dear Jeff,

Those are the names and addresses of the people who write the letters. They are there so that we know just whose opinion is being expressed and so that potential stalkers have a head start on tracking them down. For instance, the previous letter came from Jeff Thongvichit of San Francisco.

Jim McLauchlin
Congers, NY

It's as simple as that.

Another thing that should be nice 'n' simple is the Pen Pals section. Find someone who sounds interesting and send him or her a letter. It's as simple as that. But a few people seem to be a tad confused. You don't send *us* the letter—you send *them* the letter. That's why their full mailing address is listed. Send Pen Pal letters directly to your potential Pal.

Now that this letters page is a bit more reader-friendly, let's get into the mailbag. We'll start with one of our more politically active readers...

Ladies & Gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I announce the write-in candidacy of Superman, the greatest comic hero of all time, for the presidency of the United States. Why would the citizens of America vote for the Man from Metropolis, you ask? Let me tell you what this candidate is all about.

Superman is a man from the heartland, raised in working class America, a genuine hard worker and the son of Kansas farmers. Superman is also an excellent advocate of education, having earned his way through college on a combination of athletic and academic scholarships. After graduation, Superman became a man of the world, observing and reporting on international politics and eventually becoming a prize-winning journalist.

But Superman is more than just a hard worker. He is also a war hero. Superman fought the Nazi threat way back in World War II. And he's more than just a man who takes orders. He is a leader without equal as he proved during "Crisis in the Sky" and *Zero Hour*, leading incredible forces of superbeings against evil threats.

But the most important thing about Superman's candidacy is that he has a plan. We call it the REAL STEEL DEAL. These are the basic elements of the Deal: Truth, Justice and the American Way. Period. You can't build on better basics. No more lies from the White House or the Capitol when Supes is in Washington. Fair dealings for everyone—not just the rich and privileged.

And fiscally responsible? Superman will

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GAIMAN • WAGNER • KRISTIANSEN

An indispensable chapter in the lives of the Golden Age Sandman and Dream of the Endless.

Written by
NEIL GAIMAN

Plotted by
MATT WAGNER

From a story by
Wagner and Gaiman

Painted art by
TEDDY KRISTIANSEN

SANDMAN
MIDNIGHT THEATRE

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Suggested for mature readers

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eliminate the use of Air Force One for presidential travel, slashing a major White House expense. Also, Superman will use no Secret Service protection ever, eliminating yet another presidential burden on the taxpayer.

What needs to be fixed in our country today? The citizenship? No, it's the leadership. Who would you rather have leading your country? Men you barely know and cannot trust, or Superman, a man we have all known and trusted forever? The answer is a simple one:

SUPERMAN FOR PRESIDENT
THE WINNING CANDIDATE FOR 1996
"The Right (Super)Man for the Job!"*

Dwain Dickinson
Toccoa, GA

*Paid For by Friends to Elect Superman—Clark Kent, Chairman

All righty, then—Supes has thrown his hat in the ring. But every presidential candidate needs a running mate. So who would be a good vice-president should Supes be elected Prez? Hey, how *about* Prez, the old '70s DC teenage president character? He's certainly got the experience. And who would make a worthy opponent to run against Superman? Let us know who *you* think would make for an interesting political battle. We'll see if we can bring a little democratic process to these pages.

But send in your candidates quickly! Support is already building for Superman. Heck, I'm thinking of voting for the guy myself. He'd probably do a better job of running the U.S. than Dr. Doom's done with Latveria.

Howdy folks,

I have a suspicion the following has been rehashed *ad nauseam* in the past, but if so, I missed the boat. Anyway, my question: What happened to the Superman legend? When? Why? How?

Better explain myself. I was a regular reader of the Superman comics when I was a kid, but quit reading them about 25 to 30 years ago. About a year ago I got back into reading comics. Supes is still the tops, but I'm kinda lost on the background.

It used to be that Superboy was, quite simply, Superman when he was a boy. Now Superboy is a clone! When did this happen? And how about Supergirl? She used to be Superman's cousin, but now she's from some different planet. What happened?

Bob 'Frodo' Grant
Niskayuna, NY

What happened was a 1986 mini-series entitled *The Man of Steel*. In this six-issue story, writer-artist John Byrne was given license to take nearly 50 years of Superman history and rewrite it as he saw fit. He did some serious housecleaning, eliminating things like all the annoying Super-Pets that popped up in Superman stories of the 1950s via the great Earth-Krypton Expressway that existed back then. *The Man of Steel* wiped out Krypto the Super-Dog, Streaky the Super-Cat, Beppo the Super-Chimp and probably even a Bubbles the Super-Guppy for all I know. With that, Superman is truly the sole survivor of Krypton—no Supergirl, no General Zod. There were other big changes, too. The rainbow of Kryptonite was gone, replaced by a single color—green (until Mxyzptlk created red kryptonite—but that's not true kryptonite). And Ma and Pa Kent never died.

***The Man of Steel* became the "official" Superman history. Reading it should bring you up to speed. The six issues are currently available in a single collected trade paperback edition.**

Dear Wizard,

I have started to become bored with comics. Everything is starting to look the same. There are millions of stupid X-teams, Y-Teams, H-Forces, P-Units and they all seem to be drawn by Jim Lee wannabes. Don't get me wrong, though—there are some new teams that are good. *Gen*[13] is well-done. It has nice, readable art without all the unnecessary detail that gives you a headache, and the stories are quick and enjoyable. But it surprises me that it is rare to find a good comic like this. I have started to read *Heavy Metal* just for something new. Even though it's weird and very sexual, at least the stories in it are original. I just wish to see something different. Thank you.

David Hill
St. Thomas, Virgin Islands

"Everything is starting to look the same" is a common complaint in today's comic world. If you're looking for something that's good reading and a bit off the beaten track, you might want to try a couple of these: *Milk and Cheese* (Slave Labor Graphics, humor), *The Spectre* (DC, supernatural), *Sandman Mystery Theatre* (Vertigo, suspense), *Sin City* (Dark Horse, crime) or *The Invisibles* (Vertigo, freaky-ass stuff). If you're looking for some really great stories in a *Heavy Metal* vein, try tracking down some old issues of Marvel's *Epic Illustrated*. They're not too easy to find, but definitely worth the effort.

Dear Wizard,

I was wondering who writes the stories for the WildC.A.T.s cartoon.

Ryan Bromley
Farnham, VA

The answer is: Nobody you'd know. Due to the fact that half-hour pacing and commercial breaks are things that comic writers don't have to deal with, the WildC.A.T.s cartoon is written by professional TV writers, not anyone in the comic field.

Dear Wizard,

I've been collecting comics for three years. I first got into comics when a friend of mine showed me a copy of *X-Men* #1. The story was good, but the art really grabbed me—it was phenomenal! I never knew comics had come so far since I was seven or eight years old (I'm 20 now). At any rate, I've become a very avid reader and collector of comics drawn by Jim Lee.

Recently, however, I picked up *Wolverine* #88 and I was totally shocked at what I found inside. There were many instances in the art where drawings were practically copied from Jim Lee's work! When I say this, I don't mean the art was copying his "style" of drawing, I mean that the drawings were practically traced from previously published Jim Lee work! There are instances where I think the artwork of *Wolverine* #88 was downright copied from Jim Lee's work. Look at these couplets:

1) *Wolverine* #88, page 23, panel #2
Vanessa knocked down on the floor trying to get up
copied from: *WildC.A.T.s* #9, pp. 2-3
Voodoo on the ground in the same "trying to get up" position

2) *Wolverine* #88, page 26, panel #1
Vanessa still on the ground and a sword is being thrown at her
copied from: *WildC.A.T.s* #3,

Pen Pals

Want to get in touch with your fellow comic fans? Or want them to touch you? Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o Wizard Press, at Magic Words's address on page 16. Hey, make a friend!

Guido Gurrera
Age: 11 Sex: Male
4476 East State Street
Hermitage, PA 16148
Likes: *Lobo, Spawn, Ghost Rider*

Heather Hadlett
Age: 17 Sex: Female
362 Hermosita Drive
St. Pete Beach, FL 33706-2804
Likes: *Harbinger, Eternal Warrior, Archer & Armstrong*

Michael Nickas
Age: 15 Sex: Male
330 North Carbon Avenue
Price, UT 84501
Likes: All Superman titles, All Batman titles, All X-titles

David Goodman
Age: 10 Sex: Male
327 Old Norwalk Rd.
New Canaan, CT 06840
Likes: *X-Men, Ren & Stimpy, X-Force*

EPIC ILLUSTRATED™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

page 24, panel #1

Voodoo exorcising a Daemonite from Dan Quayle

3) *Wolverine* #88, page 15, panel #2

Vanessa knocking Deadpool over the head with her elbow

copied from: *WildC.A.T.s* #8, page 5, panel #3

Zealot knocking some bar creep over the head with her elbow

4) *Wolverine* #88, page 15 panel #4

Vanessa in a fighting stance saying "...your girl!!!"

copied from: *WildC.A.T.s* #1, pp. 28-29

Zealot in a fighting stance saying "Greetings, Brother Grifter."

5) *Wolverine* #88, page 15, panel #5

Vanessa jumping to avoid Deadpool's sword, slashing underneath her

copied from: *WildC.A.T.s* #10, page 7, panel #1

Zealot jumping towards a Raksha, swords swinging

I've read around a thousand comic books since I've started collecting and I don't think I've ever seen this kind of blatant copying of artwork ever before. I don't know if this is illegal or whether there's an unwritten rule that lets comic artists copy another person's work, but it seems to me that Jim Lee's rights are being trampled on!

Brutus Youn
Troy, NY

There is an unwritten rule that allows comic artists to copy a previous work, but it definitely doesn't apply in this case. Very often, a famous cover scene will be redone with new characters or situations in what is commonly known as a "cover swipe." Check out *Amazing Spider-Man* #306 for an example, which is a mock-up of the famous *Action Comics* #1. Cover swipes are generally recognized as tributes to the original, and always carry a notation of credit to the original artists involved. Such is definitely not the case here.

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, but if I were in Jim Lee's shoes right now (I wonder what size he wears?), I wouldn't be feeling too flattered. Two pencilers were credited in *Wolverine* #88, and I think whoever drew these panels ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Vanessa™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Zealot™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions.

Dear Wizard,

I have all the answers! I can explain it all!

1) Daredevil doesn't need to go through any complex ordeal to tell if his butt is properly wiped. The man has super-touch sense! He knows what a dirty, poopy butt feels like.

2) Wolverine didn't originally have bone claws. My guess is that his adamantium claws were hollow (paper-thin adamantium would still be unbreakable, y'know), and Wolvie's healing powers grew bone inside the hollow claws over the years.

3) Little do you know, but it takes exactly 2,062 regulation-sized licks to get to the center of a Tootsie Roll Tootsie Pop. Beware a man with enough free time to find out!

5) DC loves the color green because traditionally, green has always been associated with life, and therefore power. Besides, Purple Lantern and Orange Arrow just don't sound right.

6) If you take off the glasses and add white face paint, Peter David looks just like the Violator! Or vise versa.

Write me and ask more! I Dare You!

Randy Pickering
Pleasant Hill, MO

You might have all the answers, Randy, but I'll be damned if I know what the questions are. In fact, I don't think we ever asked any questions. But thanks for writing in anyway. Now take your required dosage of sedative and lie down for a while.

And I don't care *what* you have to say or how much free time you have on your hands. If the Wise Old Owl says it takes *three* licks to get to the center of a Tootsie Roll Tootsie Pop, then that's good enough for *me*, hot dammit!

Dear Wizard,

I was messing around on my computer when—quite accidentally—I broke into the computer where Marvel keeps all of its secrets. Some Marvel characters aren't what they appear to be. Check these out:

1) **The Incredible Hulk**. Turns out he wasn't even near that gamma bomb. It's amazing what steroids, plastic surgery and a split personality can do to someone.

2) **Rogue**. If you ever look closely at a comic book, you'll see hidden ropes when someone is flying. They're usually hanging from trees in the background. She flies about as well as Sandy Duncan playing Peter Pan!

3) **Iron Man**. You won't believe this one. In issue #100,000, Marvel reveals that Tony Stark's armor is really made out of melted-down Honda parts!

4) **The Human Torch**. I got two words for ya: spontaneous combustion.

Patrick Strawderman
Richmond, VA

Yeah, and I hear that Captain America has to buy Grecian Formula in 55-gallon drums to keep the gray hair away and that Thor is just a contractor who builds saunas in Northern Minnesota. That explains why he's always got his hammer with him.

Dear Wizard,

When are you guys going to do an article about the kind of music a person should listen to when reading comics? Me, I usually turn on the radio and hope something appropriate comes on. But sometimes I just pop in a CD that I think works for certain books. Here are some suggestions:

When reading Spider-Man books: All R.E.M., except *Automatic for the People*, seems to work.

When reading X-Men books: Nine Inch Nails. This works especially well for the "Age of Apocalypse" stories.

When reading *Ghost Rider* or *Ghost Rider 2099*: Offspring.

Obviously, this won't work in every situation. If Wolverine and Professor X sit down to have tea and crumpets, you don't want to hear "Head Like a Hole." But I'm curious as to what you and other readers think. I especially need a good soundtrack for *Spawn* and *The Incredible Hulk*. Thanks for listening!

Adam Frey
Southampton, PA

I've always been a believer that appropriate background music enhances your enjoyment of any reading, comics included. For me, pretty much anything by Rush or Van Morrison seems to be a good background for comic reading. Fishbone, too. Sometimes a little specialization is nice, however. If reading comics with a Western bent (for instance, Joe Lansdale's *Lone Ranger and Tonto*, *Jonah Hex* or *Dead in the West*), music with a similar bent (like The Reverend Horton Heat, Robbie Robertson, or Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys) can be a nice fit. Similarly, the Pogues seem to work with *Hellblazer* and James O'Barr will tell you The Cure goes perfectly with *The Crow*.

I've always thought that Elvis Costello is a nice soundtrack for Spider-Man. If you enjoy a little Nine Inch Nails with your X-books, you might also want to try Ministry, The Jesus and Mary Chain, or old Black Sabbath. For *The Incredible Hulk*, I'd recommend Bob Dylan or David Baerwald. If you're trying to read *Spawn*, I'd suggest you just close your eyes and think of Christmas until the urge passes.

Dear Wizard,

Does S.H.I.E.L.D. stand for Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage and Logistics Directorate?

Mark Wang
Houston, TX

It does now. But back in the good ol' days when men were men, spies were spies and not everything had to sound too high-tech for its own good, it stood for Supreme Headquarters International Espionage Law-Enforcement Division. But either way, unless you're one of the faceless hordes of Hydra, you should never yield—just back S.H.I.E.L.D.!

Dear Wizard,

How much Foo could a Foodang chuck if a Foodang could chuck Foo?

Rachel & Aimy
Racine, WI

I dunno. But your little phrase here sounds like it could be a real cool song. Instead of *saying* it, try singing it real fast and adding a big "HEY!" at the end. Then dance around the room like some crazy drunk Greek repeating it over and over. Go ahead, do it—"How much Foo could a Foodang chuck if a Foodang could chuck Foo? HEY!" It's fun. Trust me.

Dear Wizard,

How does fire keep you warm?

Jake Talley
Magalia, CA

Burning is a rapid oxidation reaction in which oxygen molecules are combined with whatever agent is being burned. In this reaction, energy in the form of light and heat is given off. The warmth you feel is the energy by-product of an oxidation reaction.

Dear Wizard,

Did *Wizard* ever play DC's softball team?

Adam Bacon
Lebanon, IL

Yeah, and we whipped their comic-geek butts, but good! We stomped 'em into the dirt! Then we all went to this really cool bar called "The Firehouse" (at 85th and Columbus in Manhattan) where the waitresses are heavenly, the Buffalo wings are scrumptious, a big roll of paper towels waits on every table, the T-shirts are cool and

Amanda Hooker Age: 16 Sex: Female 27 West Street P.O. Box 776 Nunda, NY 14517 Likes: Gambit, X-titles, *Elfquest*	Graham Barey Age: 13 Sex: Male 1520 Main St. Forest Grove, OR 97116 Likes: Ultraverse, *Boris the Bear*, *Warriors of Plasm*	Scott McKellar Age: 17 Sex: Male 35 Rashiehill Erskine, Scotland (U.K.) PA8 6ER Likes: Defiant, All Aliens titles, *X-Men 2099*	Joey Abad Age: 10 Sex: Male 4949 Corona CL Union City, CA 94587 Likes: *WildC.A.T.s*, *StormWatch*, *Cyberforce*	Christopher Yap Age: 15 Sex: Male 206 South Vendome St. Los Angeles, CA 90057 Likes: All X-titles, *Spawn*, *Cyberforce*	Dan Hewitt Age: 13 Sex: Male 912 Carriage Hill Dr. Yakima, WA 98908 Likes: X-titles, *Green Lantern*, *Beavis & Butt-Head*	Chris Fason Age: 17 Sex: Male 709 Jason Circle Birmingham, AL 35215 Likes: *The Maxx*, *Savage Dragon*, *Elektra Assassin*	James F. Dinsmore Age: 29 Sex: Male 310 N. Iuka Pratt, KS 67124-1639 Likes: Catwoman, Omaha, *Dark Shadows*

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TOO BIG...

TWO ISSUES!

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MARZ • SEARS • SMITH

X-O #50-X & #50-O

COMING THIS JUNE

they give you free postcards. It was a great night.

Dear Wordy Guys,

What the heck's the deal with your mentioning "Petit Bourgeois" price-gougers in issue #41's Magic Words? How can you possibly know that I, Blake Petit, got my start as a comic collector by way of my uncle, Joe Bourgeois, many moons ago? Joe, out of the goodness of his heart, started toting me along with him to the comic shop every two weeks and I really got into the swing of comics. Even now, several years and a driver's license later, I still go with him because we both enjoy going with each other more than we enjoy going alone.

Blake M. Petit
Ama, LA

Boy, don't you just hate it when you set out to make fun of somebody and it just backfires on you?

The "*petit bourgeois*" I was referring to are the stinking, money-grubbing, capitalist, running-dog oppressors of the masses who try to crush myself and my proletarian brethren under their jackbooted heels. Those stinking bastards will be the first up against the wall when the revolution comes.

By no means did I mean to single out you and your uncle, but if I were either of you, I'd think about changing my last name just to be on the safe side.

Hey, Free Stuff!

As we told you last month, the fourth annual *Wizard* Halloween costume contest is underway, and unless you want to be lame and not get into the true spirit of things, here's your chance to win some cool crap. All you have to do is dress up like your favorite comic book/fantasy/science fiction/whatever character, take some snapshots of yourself, mail it in to us creative geniuses here at *Wizard*, and bam, you've got a shot at winning. And winning big! This year's Grand Prize Winner walks off with an Aiwa stereo system (complete with CD player, speakers and all that other neato hi-tech stuff), along with cd movie soundtracks to *Halloween, The Exorcist, Friday the 13th, The Day the Earth Stood Still, Bram Stoker's Dracula* and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, paperback copies of top-shelf horror novels *Salem's Lot, It, Watchers, Silence of the Lambs*, and even Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft collections (Hey, some of that serious literature stuff can be pretty scary, too!), videotape copies of *Alien, John Carpenter's The Thing, Jaws, The Exorcist, Night of the Living Dead* and *Ernest Scared Stupid*, and heck, we'll even chuck in one o' them freaky Ouija Boards! There'll be some runner-up prizes, too, but who really cares?

So anyway, here are the rules and whatnot:

1) Dress up like anything you want—comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever (the more original your getup, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be homemade, but you can add store-bought items to accent your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Darth Vader mask for your Darth Vader costume, but you can use a surfboard for your Silver Surfer costume, *comprende*?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will not be accepted!). Then write your name, age, full address and phone number on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses, just in case some pictures suck. And remember that magic five-letter word: focus!

4) To be eligible to win, we must receive your photo by September 1, 1995, so you'd better haul ass!

Send your entry to:
COSTUME CONTEST IV
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

If Copy Editor Andrew Kardon can make an ass of himself by dressing up like Twisted Sister's Dee Snider, so can you!

Worf ™ & © Paramount Pictures. Andrew's photo: Marianne Luhrs.

Dear Wizard Guys,

So you want to know which features I hate and which ones I like, huh? Well I hate features on *Star Trek, Star Trek, Star Trek*! I hate the comics, I hate Captain Kirk and I hate all the one trillion TV spin-offs like *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*. *Star Trek* sucks sour frog ass! So from now on, no more *Star Trek*. Instead, print stuff about *Star Wars*. After all, *Star Wars* comics rule and *Star Wars* movies kick.

David Nguyen
Harrisburg, PA

Oooh! A Trekkie-baiter! Lemme tell ya, David—I admire your courage. I'd never have the guts to denounce Trekism in such a public forum. Those *Trek* people scare me. Once, while standing in line at a Taco Bell, I was approached by a Trekkie who wanted to engage me in conversation about something called a "Tasha Yar." All I wanted was a Burrito Supreme. You have to admit—a scene like that can be pretty scary.

Dear Wizard,

I don't know if this is a secret contest or not (even if it's not, I'll still take some free stuff), but I noticed that the price guide in *Wizard* #44 has no pictures of Image Comics.

Nick Miller
Bolingbrook, IL

Secret contest? *Secret contest?* Now what the bloody hell is a secret contest? Isn't the purpose of a magazine contest to get readers involved and encourage interactive participation? If we were to run a contest, why would we make it a secret? You'll get nothing and like it, Eagle-Eye.

Dear Wiz,

What is the difference between Hobgoblin, Demogoblin and the Green Goblin? Aside from costume color and gliders, they look exactly the same.

Mark Lorang
Arlington, TX

The original Green Goblin (Norman Osborn) came first, debuting in *Amazing Spider-Man* #14. He duked it out with Spidey for years until his death in the classic *ASM* #122. Shortly after that, Norman's son and Peter Parker's old roommate, Harry Osborn, wigged out and took over being the Green Goblin with ish #136. Then some clod named Bart Hamilton ran around as the Goblin for

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THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES...

5...

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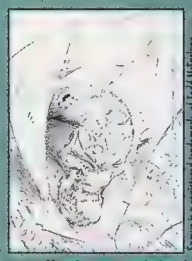

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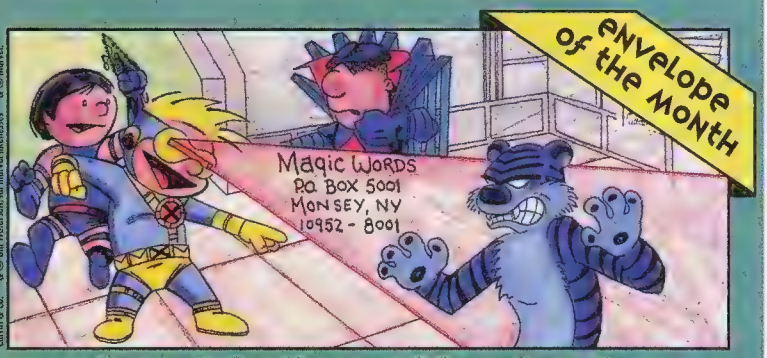
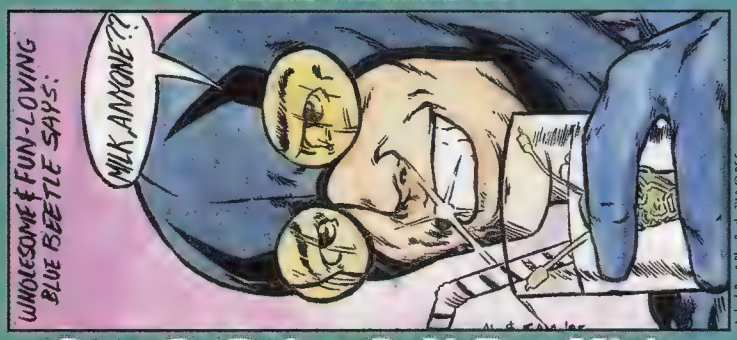
When you drop us a line, show us your drawin' skill! If it's good, we'll print it here, and *boom*, you'll be famous! Just think, as soon as your envelope gets printed, you'll become a household name and you'll start dating the likes of Sandra Bullock and Bill Pullman (or both, if you like). Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *X-Universe* #1 signed by Scott Lobdell, *X-Force* #38 signed by Fabian Nicieza, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original framed Greg Capullo sketch of Spawn. Thanks for the hellish art, Greg! Artists: please include a clearly printed return address on the **back** of your envelope.



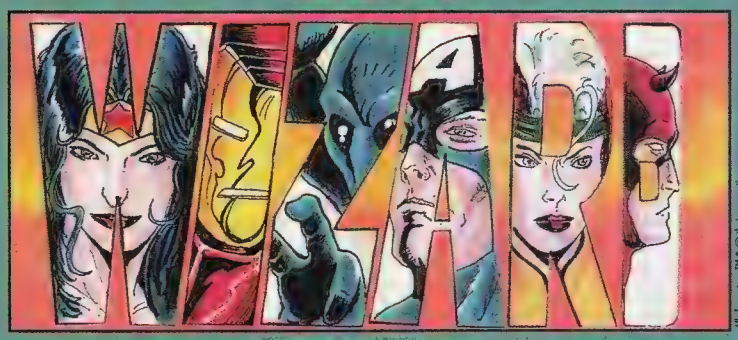
Calvin & Co. ™ & © Bill Watterson. All Marvel likenesses ™ & © Marvel.

Angel Anthony Mendez Jr.
Valley Stream, NY



Ambush Bug & Blue Beetle ™ & © DC Comics

Sam O. Dolan & Al Ray Miche
Racine, WI



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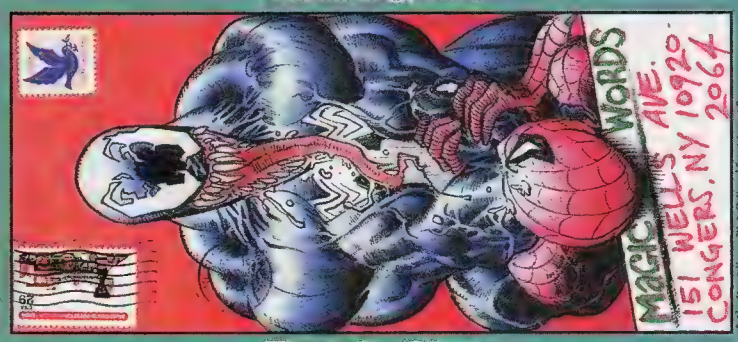
Tong Thor
Fitchburg, MA



Spider-Man & Venom ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Frank Cho
Beltsville, MD

a few issues, but he was pretty lame.

Scoot ahead a few years. Ned Leeds finds a stash of old Green Goblin equipment that Norman Osborn had hidden, and becomes the Hobgoblin as of *ASM* #238. (Incidentally, Hobgoblin creator Roger Stern has asserted that Leeds was not *his* Hobgoblin's identity. Hey, Rog—mind tellin' us who your Hobgoblin was?) Leeds eventually slept the dirt sleep and a guy named Jason Macendale, formerly a Green Goblin-imitator called Jack O'Lantern, took over as the second Hobgoblin.

In the *Infinity War*, when super-evil duplicates of superbeings were created by The Magus, the Demogoblin came about.

Harry Osborn reprised his Green Goblin role in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #180, but (supposedly) died in an explosion with issue #200 of the same series. And now there's a brand-spankin' new Green Goblin cavorting through the Spider-books, but practically zero is known about him yet.

Whew! That ought to bring you up to snuff on which Goblin is which. Next time, could you just ask about the Shocker?

Dear Wizard,

Can Wolverine's claws rip through Iron Man's suit?

Nilson Montoya
Queens, NY

Depends. If we're talking the Iron Man armor, the answer is yes. But if Tony Stark is wearing a "Herb Tarlek *WKRP in Cincinnati* polyester double-knit special," no friggin' way. That stuff could take a direct hit from a nuke and survive.

Dear Mr. McLauchlin,

Why can't Barry White get enough of her love...babe?

S.D. Morehouse
Chester, NH

I don't know why, but one thing I do know for sure: If I had a voice like Barry White, I'd be up to my armpits in women.

See ya.

Jim McLauchlin

Any single women over the age of 18 looking to be up to Jim McLauchlin's armpits are encouraged to write to the Magic Words address below. And we mean REALLY ENCOURAGED. [Jim needs a hug.—Editor]

Send your letters to:
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Congers, NY 10920-2064

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Wizards OF THE COAST

JURGENS on New SPIDEY TITLE

Superman's Dan Jurgens is bringing his talents to Marvel Comics this November, when the artist-writer will be writing and drawing an all-new, monthly as-yet-untitled Spider-Man book.

"It's something I'm real excited about doing," said Jurgens. "There are several classic characters in comics, and Spider-Man certainly fits that status. When you're offered a chance to work on it, it's really hard to walk away."

"Dan Jurgens will debut in a very major way with a very major revelation in Spider-Man's evolution," said Bob Budiansky, editor-in-chief of the Spidey Universe. "I don't want to give too much away. Peter Parker will be around and he will still be married to Mary Jane. As to who winds up as Spider-Man [i.e., Peter or Ben Reilly], that's a question that will be answered in the next couple of months, starting with [July's] *Web of Spider-Man* #128."

Jurgens, whose work will be inked by Klaus Janson, views the current Spidey-chaos (including the revelation that the Peter Parker we've known for years is a clone of the original) as an excellent jumping-on point.

"Because of what they've done with this whole Clone scenario, it really is sort of a clean slate. And maybe this is as close as Marvel will ever get to doing some of the things that [writer-artist] John Byrne did when he restarted Superman [in DC's 1986 *Man of Steel* mini-series]."

Besides all of the shake-ups in Spider-Man's personal life, you can also look for a few jolts in creative teams. Artist Tom Lyle's last issue of *Spider-Man* is #61, and following a few fill-in issues, John Romita Jr. will be taking over as the book's regular penciler with Al Williamson inking. *Web of Spider-Man* #129 is artist Steven Butler's last issue, with Paris Karonous temporarily replacing him. And finally, writer J.M. DeMatteis will continue scripting *Amazing Spider-Man* through October, before leaving the title.

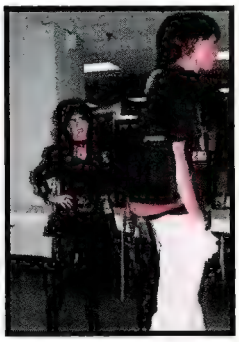
And when November rolls around, Jurgens will have his hands on the stars of the two biggest comic book companies. "I don't know if anyone has written Superman and Spider-Man at the same time before, but it's nice to be able to handle characters with that kind of identification. And doing Spider-Man, he is totally different than what Superman is. I want to be able to bring a sense of spirit and fun to the stories that will hopefully make the book a whole lot of fun to read."

—Andrew Kardon

SPIDER-MAN ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Confused comic fan questioned gender. "Am I a guy or a girl? Wait, let me check. Hm hm, hm. Yep, that's a sock."

Comic fans mis-diagnosed with the Ebola virus. "No, no, we always smell this way! God, help us!" screamed fans moments before they were incinerated.



Comic conventions now feature 3-foot women. "Hey, that's a 3-foot woman!" noticed startled fan.

NEWS

BONE Goes to IMAGE

Cartoonist Jeff Smith has self-published *Bone* through his Cartoon Books imprint for 20 issues. Beginning with *Bone* #21, shipping in October, Cartoon Books and Smith will be joining the Image Comics stable.

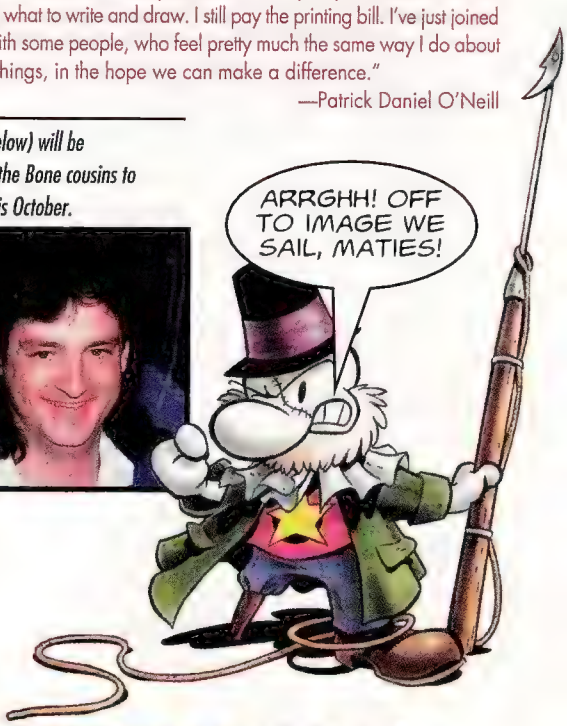
Smith cites the rapidly shifting sands of comics distribution as a major factor in his decision to ally himself with the third largest publisher in the industry. "It looks pretty much like the industry is being carved up by the big players—both publishers and distributors—and like in other industries, the people who are writing the future of our industry are not thinking of the little guy," he explained. "I've heard some frightening predictions of what the distributor catalogs that are left will be like. It probably would have been possible for me to make it through, but I think I would have been knocked around pretty hard. Going over to Image puts me in their part of the catalog, assuring that *Bone* won't wind up as a single line of print on the last page of the catalog."

Smith assures his fans that *Bone* will remain in black-and-white and will continue to be released on a bi-monthly basis. Smith and Image plan to re-release the 20 previous issues under the Image imprint on a monthly basis, simultaneously with the new issues. The re-issues will feature all-new covers by Smith and will be the final reprinting of those issues in comic book form. Smith has also said he is tinkering with new paper stock considerations for *Bone*'s covers. And to help with any confusion, September will see a Bone Sourcebook—"a small, maybe eight-page comic, given away free by retailers," said Smith—giving new readers a chance to catch up on the first 20 issues of *Bone*, as well as explaining the whole move to Image.

"I know there will be a lot of people who think I've sold out, I'm no longer independent, I'm no longer self-publishing...and it's kind of a fine line," Smith admitted. "I won't try to fight with somebody who adamantly insists I'm no longer a self-publisher—but I pretty much am. I'm still deciding what to write and draw. I still pay the printing bill. I've just joined forces with some people, who feel pretty much the same way I do about a lot of things, in the hope we can make a difference."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

Smith (below) will be bringing the Bone cousins to Image this October.



Phoney Bone™ & © Jeff Smith. Photo by Al Ortega.

HILDEBRANDT BROS. Make a COVENANT with QUESADA

Science fiction and fantasy painters Tim and Greg Hildebrandt enter the world of creator-owned comic book characters with Covenant, who will first appear in Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's *Ash* #5 shipping in August.

The Hildebrandts, whose careers have spanned over three decades, are best known for their posters, calendars, book covers and the 1994 Marvel Masterpieces trading cards.

Covenant, a character created by the Hildebrandt Bros., debuts in Ash #5.

In each issue of *Ash*, a guest artist has illustrated a centerfold piece featuring Ash and a creator-owned character. When Quesada contacted the Hildebrandt brothers, the assignment grew into much more. *Ash* #5 will feature a Hildebrandt-painted *cover* instead of a centerfold. A second cover, illustrated by Quesada and Palmiotti, lies underneath.

In addition, Covenant will be the first creator-owned guest character to appear in *Ash*. The Hildebrandts will paint Covenant for each panel and splash page in which he appears. Through the magic of Digital Chameleon's color separations, each painting will be superimposed over the Quesada/Palmiotti-illustrated pages.

"Covenant is a member of an ancient race of winged beings from beyond the edge of our known universe," said Tim Hildebrandt. "He was once Ephere-Al, until he was poisoned by the flesh of the evil Molouch and transformed into Covenant in a pact with God." Tim and Greg describe Covenant as a vampire who has fed upon humanity for centuries. "He has a remembrance of his good past, but he generally displays a rather vitriolic disposition," noted Tim.

The Hildebrandts intend to see what sort of reaction Covenant receives before committing to future comic-book appearances. They do say, however, they would like to continue working in the comics field. Comics, according to the Hildebrandts, are among their earliest influences, especially strips such as *Prince Valiant* and *Terry and the Pirates*, the latter of which the brothers currently illustrate for national syndication.

—Christopher Griffen

ASH™ & © Quesada & Palmiotti. COVENANT™ & © Tim and Greg Hildebrandt.

HUGHES Reduces GHOST Workload

Readers have undoubtedly noticed that there have been some changes in Dark Horse Comics' *Ghost*, starting with June's #3.

"Adam Hughes did brilliant work on the first two issues, but he also found that maintaining the level of quality he wanted was taking longer than he expected," acknowledged *Ghost* editor Michael Eury, "so we have rescheduled things. Adam will be doing the covers and a six-page lead-in to the main story in each issue. The main feature will be illustrated by the team of Scott Benefiel and Jason Rodriguez."

Several attempts to contact Hughes for a statement were unsuccessful.

Ghost #3 featured a Hughes cover and an opening section by Hughes and inker Karl Story; a segment guest-starring King Tiger, with art by Casey Jones and Tom Simmons; and dream sequences by Paul Guinan, Colleen Doran, Tom Grummett and Simmons. "It was the perfect issue to make a change," Eury said, "because it was an ideal issue to showcase various artists' interpretations of the character."

Ghost #4, as planned from the start, has art by Matt Haley and Simmons; #5 has a Hughes cover and a guest art team of Terry Dodson and Gary Martin; #6 has a Hughes cover and full art by the new team; and #7 begins the new set-up with Hughes doing both the cover and an introductory interior segment.

GHOST™ & © Dark Horse Comics. Photo © 1995 Jim Gund.

In the new schedule, Haley will no longer be doing every fourth issue as originally announced, said Eury, but will "more than likely be doing a special *Ghost* one-shot that I can't say anything more about at this time."

Eury stressed that "all of the artists we've chosen are being challenged by the level of work that Adam has done to start things off and the very interesting visual style he's laid out for the title." Eric Luke continues as *Ghost*'s regular writer.

—Jack Curtin

Hughes (top) will be spending a lot less time with Ghost.

Wizard Special Report: PAPER HIKES PRESSURE COMICS PRICES

While it's a truism that—since the first time comics went from a dime to 12 cents more than 30 years ago—cover prices have always gone up, the last six months or so have seen more pressure on publishers to increase prices than ever before. And the major source of that pressure is the cost of paper.

According to industry sources, prices for all paper products began rising in 1993, largely because of increased demand for paper products overseas. That, plus a growing U.S. consumption of paper, created about a 20 percent shortfall in the ability of U.S. mills to meet demand for paper products.

The biggest price increases came for industrial and commercial paper, such as the newsprint and other white uncoated paper typically used to produce comic books. For example, newsprint sold for about $654 a ton in May 1994. In February 1995, it sold for $800 a ton, according to S.G. Warburg Inc., a Wall Street brokerage firm. Book and magazine publishers haven't escaped the crunch, either, but industry executives say the cost of coated magazine paper hasn't gone up as dramatically as newsprint.

That last factor may explain DC Comics' decision to upgrade the paper used in all its books in March and April, along with another price hike. While the better paper costs more, its price is more stable than that of lesser grades. DC's executive director-production, Bob Rozakis, refused to confirm that analysis, referring *Wizard* to DC's original announcement of the changes, which spoke more of production advantages than price advantages.

Dave Scroggy, vice president-publishing at Dark Horse Comics, however, said his company is making adjustments wherever possible. "We've taken steps to alter the paper stocks we're using," he said. "We downgraded our deluxe books to 37-pound Miraweb stock from a 50-pound stock. The difference is difficult to notice, unless you're aware the change was made."

In general, the publishers were in accord—nobody wants to raise prices. "Our position is that we are going to absorb the cost and not raise cover prices," Acclaim president Steve Massarsky told *Wizard*. "We hope we can hold that position. As it stands right now, we can do it. If paper continues to rise, I can't guarantee anything. I think cover prices in the industry are already too high; I think we shouldn't be any higher."

No one could offer any reassurance, however, that paper prices will not continue to put pressure on comics prices. "The only sign I've seen that the skyrocketing paper prices have slowed slightly is that I haven't gotten any increases yet this month," said Rozakis. "It is my feeling that the rise has to *slow* over the next six months to a year, but it will not stop. We have not topped out yet."

Scroggy agreed that the hike is far from over: "They've told us to expect another price increase on paper by the summer."

Wizard will keep readers posted on any more price hikes from publishers.

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

DANZIG Hosts Show in Comic Store

MTV's *Superock* boldly went where it had never gone before—to a comic book store. More specifically, St. Mark's Comics in New York City's East Village.

"MTV's been wanting [Glenn] Danzig to host this show," said Steven Wardlaw, Director of Marketing and Promotions for Glenn Danzig's comic book company Verotik, "and Glenn wanted to host it from a comic shop."

Danzig isn't doing comics just to cash in on his rock star fame, though. "Glenn's writing and publishing comic books because he's been a fan since he was a kid," explained Wardlaw. "Of course, he wanted to draw attention to Verotik, but I think Glenn wanted to draw attention to comic books in general. He thinks that comics are an under-appreciated art form."

Though Danzig keeps the music and comics separate, Wardlaw admitted that there is a crossover audience, "and that's good."

There's a booth hawking Verotik products at all Danzig concerts, and music fans can get their first peek of his comics.

"The great part of having Glenn as the publisher is that it is bringing a whole new audience into comics and into the comics stores," Wardlaw chuckled, "as Hart Fisher [Verotik's managing editor] likes to say, 'It's virgin money.'"

—Ruth Morrison

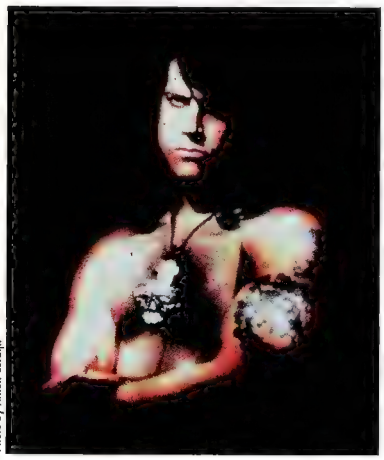


Photo by Anton Corbijn

Even without a shirt on, Danzig is cool enough to give comics a good name.

WIZARD Wins Design Award

Wizard: The Guide to Comics recently won a 1995 Visual Club Publication Cover Show Award of Excellence for the cover to *Wizard #44*, which featured the Gen[13] crew by artists J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner. The Visual Club is a professional design organization that does this sorta thing every year.

We'd like to thank J. Scott and Alex for a truly kickin' cover, as well as the Visual Club for selecting it. And if they liked *that* cover...well, there's plenty more where that came from!

GEN[13]™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc.

COMPANY UPDATES

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM
That wacky Cerebus Tour heads into Chicago this August, when Cerebus' own Dave Sim and Gerhard bring along creators Larry Marder, Evan Dorkin and Rick Veitch to the Windy City.

AC COMICS
This July sees a few new releases. *Femforce #86* comes as a regular edition and a special edition polybagged with the fifth installment of the *AC Index* by Ken Kerouac, which covers background information on *Femforce #31-#40*....*Golden Age Greats* vol. 5 reprints the 1940s origin of Iron Jaw....The *She-Cat Chronicles* TPB reprints *She-Cat #1-#4*. This signed edition is limited to 400 copies.

ARCHIE COMICS
Your favorite little video game hero, Sonic, has another special in July! *Sonic Triple Trouble Special #1*, adapting Sonic's new Triple Trouble game for Sega's Game Gear, features all-new stories and artwork. It also debuts the hedgehog's new foe Nack the Weasel, and offers a Knuckles back-up story leading into his upcoming mini-series.

ARIA PRESS
Good news and bad news about the *A Distant Soil Sketchbook*: it has been canceled, but the material will be featured in issues #13 to #15 of *A Distant Soil*. These three issues will be 32 pages instead of 24, and will include the "Seasons of Spring" story from the graphic novel of that name, plus all the pages that were slated to appear in the sketchbook, and will be $2.95 instead of $2.50. The page count and price will return to normal with issue #16....Aria publisher Colleen Doran and attorney Mike Lovitz, who is reviewing all the text in Doran's September-shipping *101 Things Your Publisher Doesn't Want You to Know* book, will be attending the San Diego Comi-Con in late July, where both of them will be answering your legal-related questions about the complicated comic book business. Doran will also appear at the Chicago Comic Con from June 30th to July 2nd. These will be the two conventions where you can pick up the 24-page preview of *101 Things* for $1.25.

BLACKOUT COMICS
Blackout launches *Ms. Cyanide & Ice* this July, where Ms. Cyanide and Ice pursue an evil mastermind who frees all of America's criminals.

BONGO COMICS
People who can't wait for Halloween will be glad to hear about Bongo's extra-special *Treehouse of Horror* comic, due out in October. Just like the annual Simpsons Halloween cartoon, this 48-page book will have three stories, but the truly special part of the book is that all three stories will be written by major comic creators. *Madman Comics'* Mike Allred will write a "Little Shop of Horrors" parody, *Bone's* Jeff Smith contributes a Moby Dick story, and *Starman's* James Robinson hits us with his rendition of *Cat People*. Should be some scary fun!

BOWEN DESIGNS
Coming in August is the Hunter Rose/Grendel statue, which will be available through Bowen Designs and Diamond Distributors. Designed by Grendel creator Matt Wagner and sculptor Randy Bowen, only 500 statues will be available, so get your orders in while you can.

GRENDEL™ & © Matt Wagner

Continued on page 24

GREEN ARROW®

WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD

AIMING BEYOND!

COMING IN JULY

DIXON, APARO & FERNANDEZ

AND DAMAGGIO & CAMPANELLA

Phase 2: DC and DIAMOND's Exclusive Agreement

On April 28, 1995, DC Comics and Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc., the second largest comics publisher and the largest comics distributor in North America, jointly announced that, beginning with books shipping in July, Diamond would become DC's exclusive agent for sales to the direct market. This was later changed to books shipping in September, as part of the settlement of a lawsuit brought by Capital City Distribution against DC and Diamond.

The agreement leaves Diamond totally independently owned and operated. Unlike the previous arrangement, where DC sold comics to several distributors who in turn sold them to retailers, DC will be selling directly to stores, with Diamond providing services to DC such as solicitation, packing, shipping and collections.

This arrangement follows closely on Marvel's purchase of Heroes World Distribution Company, and its establishment as the sole distributor of Marvel and Malibu comics to the direct market, and is widely viewed as a direct reaction to that change in the marketplace. Unlike Marvel/HWDC, however, the DC/Diamond deal will not mean that Diamond will cease carrying other publisher's comics.

DC Executive VP and Publisher Paul Levitz explained the factors which compelled DC to seek new ways of reaching the direct market. "After Marvel's acquisition of Heroes World, we believed that the status quo was fundamentally changed both for publishers—giving Marvel potentially some new marketing tools—and distributors. Our analysis made it clear we had to have access to the competitive tools. Hoping that the old world could remain without future change was unrealistic."

The same day DC and Diamond made the announcement, Capital City—Diamond's chief competitor—filed suit in federal court in Wisconsin under the Wisconsin Fair Dealership law to prevent the termination of DC's distributorship agreement. Capital had also sued Marvel under the same law. That earlier suit was quickly settled, with terms undisclosed, and within a week Capital had also settled with DC. Capital is currently in negotiation with Dark Horse, Image, Acclaim and Kitchen Sink, seeking similar exclusive agreements.

Levitz predicts the change will be healthy for the specialty comic market in the long run. "There will certainly be short term problems for the shops in adapting to Marvel's changes, this deal and the likely other changes to come, but we hope for—and will work towards—the best possible outcome."

—Paul J. Grant

Continued from page 22

CALIBER PRESS

Get to know two Caliber titles when *A.K.A. Goldfish: Joker*, the newest installment in the *A.K.A. Goldfish* crime drama series, and *Oz #0*, which takes place before the first issue of the popular series, both ship in August. Also that month, you'll find the *Kabuki Color Gallery* (which has 32 color interpretations of Kabuki by artists like Colleen Doran, Michael Bair and her creator, David Mack) and *The Apparition: Visitations*, featuring several stories starring the Archangel Adriel, who achieved popularity in Caliber's *Negative Burn* anthology series. All these books go for $2.95, except for the *Goldfish* book, which is $3.50.

CHAOS! COMICS

Many well-known creators will be dressing up Lady Death for August's *Lady Death in Lingerie #1*, an all-ages one-shot. This pin-up book's packed with beautiful works by many hot artists, including Joe Quesada, Jim Balent, Bill Tucci, Buzz, Tom Mandrake, Val Semeiks and centerfold artist Steven Hughes, who tops the book off with a wraparound cover! Plus, the winning entry in *Wizard* and Chaos!'s recent Lady Death Swimsuit Contest is spotlighted! And the incentive edition for this one's definitely unique: for every 50 copies ordered of the Lingerie book, retailers will receive a free Leather Premium Edition! Whoa!...Lady Death poster collectors shouldn't miss out on the Lady Death Poster #3, reproducing Steven Hughes' striking cover to the third issue of the original mini-series, shipping in July for $5.95.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Congrats to retailer Brian Hibbs of Comix Experience in San Francisco, CA, and attorney

KABUKI ™ & © David Mack

Louise Nemschoff of Beverly Hills, CA, the two newly elected members of the CBLDF!...Diamond Comic Distributors has once again decided to benefit the Defense Fund, by donating the proceeds from raffle/auction events held at 34 retailer seminars in early June. Items up for grabs included a copy of *Sovereign Seven #1* signed by Chris Claremont and exclusive autographed prints by major artists like Simon Bisley.

CRUSADE COMICS

You can meet *Shi* creator Bill Tucci when he comes to your town this summer, during Warrior Tour '95! Stops include the Chicago Con on the weekend of June 30th to July 2nd, and the San Diego Retailer's Expo and ComiCon from July 24th to 30th, during which *Shi #7* and a limited black-and-white commemorative edition of the *Shi/Cyblade Special: The Battle for Independents* will be released. Tell 'im *Wizard* sent ya!

DARK HORSE COMICS

Dark Horse has announced that it has acquired the license from Hasbro to publish G.I. Joe comic books; the license formerly belonged to Marvel Comics. The publisher's plans for the Joes were unknown at press time....Art Adams' long-awaited four-issue *Monkeyman and O'Brien* mini-series for the Legend imprint has been rescheduled for March '96. Serving as a warm-up to that will be a *MM & O'B* one-shot, which will ship in February....*Tribe*'s Larry Stroman and Todd Johnson are reuniting for *The Mark*, a fourish mini-series starting in September....Coming soon is Joe Kubert's *Fax from Sarajevo*, a true story taken from faxes sent to Kubert by his friend and agent Ervin Rustemagic from war-torn Bosnia. Expect this 144-page hardcover graphic novel to ship in early 1996.

DARK MOON PRODUCTIONS

Rare Breed #1, shipping this July, stars seven former super criminals, who band together to serve the governments of the free world....*Divine Madness #2*, also shipping in July, opens with Kinyuni Smith getting attacked in Central Park and then treated by doctors who are part of a bizarre cult.

DC COMICS

There has been a rumor circulating that there will be a *Batman vs. Aliens* crossover with Dark Horse Comics. Berni Wrightson is said to be the artist. Neither DC nor Dark Horse would confirm or deny these rumors....Hey, Super Friends fans: Zan and Jayna (without Space

Continued on page 26

CHANGELING

The Dreaming

The most glorious dream of all

The journey is now complete.
You've entered the sensual darkness of Vampire: The Masquerade,
crushed the corrupting minions of the Wyrm in Werewolf: The Apocalypse,
come to understand the paradoxical nature of reality in Mage: The Ascension,
and embraced the dark heart of death in Wraith: The Oblivion.
Now, join us in one more story
and welcome one more view of the World of Darkness.
This is no ending,
but a beginning,
a new journey.
Awaken to the Dreaming
the child within us all!

Changeling: The Dreaming, the fifth and final game in the Storyteller series, on sale in July. Full color throughout. Also, be on the lookout for Changeling Cantrip cards, a new addition to the Storyteller system that adds a whole new level of play to your Changeling chronicle.

WHITE WOLF

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EISNER Joins KITCHEN SINK Board

Comic giant Will Eisner has agreed to join the board of directors of Kitchen Sink Entertainment, Inc., his primary publisher for the last quarter century.

"I thought about this some time before I accepted," said Eisner, "but I've always had one foot under the drawing board and the other under the desk since the day I started. Since Kitchen Sink publishes all my work, it's altogether logical that I do this and I hope I can make a contribution."

Eisner, best known as the creator of the Sunday newspaper strip, *The Spirit*, has worked with Kitchen Sink since 1972 when the company began reprinting the series. His 13 graphic novels, including the recently released *Dropsie Avenue: The Neighborhood*, have all been published by Kitchen Sink. The prestigious Eisner Award, given to comic creators and publishers alike, is named in his honor and his 1985 *Comics and Sequential Art* is considered one of the most classic texts on comic art.

"Yeah, he's got a little bit of experience in the field," laughed KSP publisher Denis Kitchen. "On every level I can imagine, he's a perfect choice."

The KSP Board was formed in 1994 when Kitchen Sink Press was acquired by an investment group formed of Ocean Capital Corporation. Other members are Kitchen, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* co-creator Kevin Eastman, Interfilm Inc. chairman Lawrence Kuppin and producer Bob Rehme (*The Hunt for Red October*, *Patriot Games*). "Will, myself and Kevin represent three generations of cartoonist-entrepreneurs on our board," Kitchen noted.

—Jack Curtin

Kitchen Sink welcomes Will Eisner as a member of its board of directors.

Photo by Al Ortego.

Continued from page 24

Monkey Gleek, dammit) will appear in *Extreme Justice* #9 shipping in August. They'll have their same lame-o powers and everything!...Jack Kirby's New Gods get another turn at an ongoing monthly book starting in August, courtesy of creators Tom Peyer, Rachel Pollack, Luke Ross and Brian Garvey.

DYLAN FUND

Here's an update on Dylan Vogel, the severely injured child mentioned in issue #46's "Comics for Charity" news item: According to MRC Comics' Maryellen and Russ Chamberlain, who held an auction at their store to benefit Dylan, the event raised over $2,000 for Dylan's medical bills. Russ would like to personally thank every customer, dealer, publisher, and comic creator who donated funds, items or time to the auction. And special thanks to creators Buzz, John Hebert, Len Senecal and Rick Parker, along with local Albany, N.Y., stores Earthworld Comics and Mike's Comics. Dylan was recently approved for the intestinal transplant he needs, and is now awaiting a small intestine, which will help him live normally again.

ENTITY COMICS

Jae Lee does the cover for *Metal Militia* #1, which tells the story of Internal Operations Specialist Tommy Balazzar, who's tormented by demons from his war-torn past. It ships in August and retails for $2.50, though a polybagged edition with the 3-D alien-fighting game, *Corridor 7: Alien Invasion*, on floppy disk is available for $6.95....David Mack's dark heroine Kabuki will be showing up in a pin-up gallery in *Gensaga: Ancient Warrior* #1, a samurai saga, also shipping this August. $2.50 will get you the regular edition, and $6.95 gets ya the polybagged version with the *Street Fighter*-type game *Sango Fighter*, also on disk.

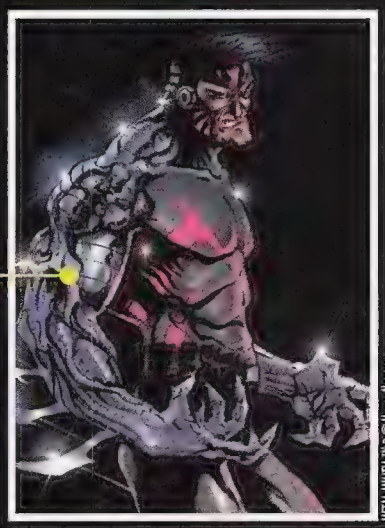
HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

In September, fans of *Double Impact* and *Symbols of Justice* will be treated to a unique connection between the two books. Also, the fall brings *Nikki Blade*, starring a female vigilante from the streets.

IMAGE COMICS

• Ballistic Studios (Top Cow Productions)

Ballistic #3, due in September, features Wet-Works....Marc Silvestri will draw the cover for the *Cyberforce Universe Sourcebook* #3....*Velocity* #1 (of 3) also ships in September, and features the world's fastest woman in her first solo adventure....*Cyberforce Origins* #3—*Impact* sheds light on Impact, the team's largest and strongest member.



METAL MILITIA™ & © Hung Nguyen

• Extreme Studios

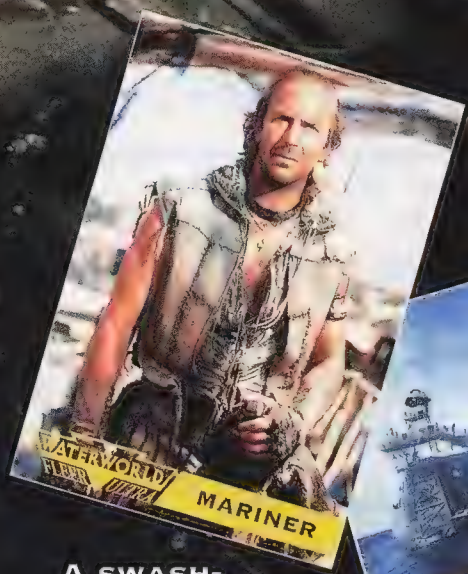
Prophet #1, shipping in August, will include a wraparound chromium cover by Stephen Platt, and an alternate painted cover by Boris Vallejo. Chuck Dixon (*Team 7*, *Detective Comics*) handles writing chores. This all-new series marks the first time Platt has drawn an entire #1 book....*Ash* penciler Joe Quesada will be penciling nine interconnecting covers for Extreme Studios that will be released throughout the summer. When all nine covers are put together, they form a collage that will be released as a poster in the fall. *Ash* inker Jimmy Palmiotti will ink each of the covers. The nine titles are *Bloodstrike*, *Brigade*, *Chapel*, *Glory*, *Knightmare*, *Newmen*, *Prophet*, *Supreme* and *Youngblood*....Writer Beau Smith and artist Dan Fraga team up on *Berzerkers* #1, due in August. The four-issue mini-series follows the exploits of resistance fighters Cross, Greylore, Wildmane and Hatchet, who were previously featured in *Youngblood* #2 and in the "Supreme Apocalypse" crossover. Also in August, Jo Duffy (*Glory*) writes *Blood Pool* #1, as the young cadets from Youngblood go out on their own. Both *Berzerkers* #1 and *Blood Pool* #1 will ship with variant covers....*Chapel* #1 will ship with a variant cover, as Image's most notorious assassin journeys into the bayou swamps of New Orleans to battle a psychotic

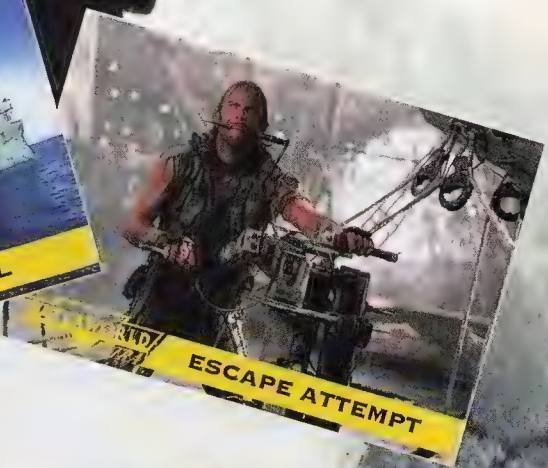
Continued on page 28

THE ACTION ADVENTURE MOVIE EVENT OF SUMMER '95

WATERWORLD

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS A MOVIE EXTRAVAGANZA THAT'S FILLED WITH HEROES, VILLAINS, ELABORATE WEAPONRY, HEART STOPPING BATTLES AND ADVENTURE!





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GIFFEN and his Bunch of PunX

The place is the island town of Acclamation, Oregon. It is seemingly a magnet for all kinds of strange phenomena, such as UFO crashes, meteor impacts—and kids with surprising superpowers. Being this is the Valiant Universe, that means Toyo Harada is *very* interested. But the kids aren't interested in Harada, so they unite as PunX.

That's the premise for writer-penciler Keith Giffen's four-issue mini-series by that title, with the first issue shipping in July. Giffen blames the series on, of all things, a television talk show. "The catalyst behind *PunX* was that I was walking through the room while my wife had a talk show on about Generation X [people in their late teens and 20s]. A kid was saying, 'You don't understand: We are the generation where the buck finally stopped,'" he recalled. "That sort of encapsulates a lot of the anger that's out there."

There are five members to the team: Cram, who can squeeze himself into any space, no matter how small; Aztlan, who absorbs the strength and endurance of those she ritually sacrifices; Frontline, who is impervious to injury and seems to have unstoppable momentum; Hellion, who claims to be of demonic origin; and Gutter Rat, who generates an aura that plays havoc with known physics.

"The Generation Xers are the protagonists, the heroes. People like me, people over 40, we're the villains."

—Patrick Daniel O'Neill

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Continued from page 26

madman....*Crypt* #1 (of 2) features the villain of "Supreme Apocalypse" on his own....The *Extreme 3000 Prelude* is here. Rob Liefeld, Roger Cruz and Eric Stephenson team up as Youngblood, Prophet, Supreme and the Newmen all come together in the dangerous prison state known as Manhattan. This futuristic story-starter ships in August.

• **Highbrow Entertainment**

Those funny-lookin', tough-fightin' Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles make a guest appearance this August in *Savage Dragon* #22, picking up from the first part of this year's Turtles/Dragon crossover, put out by Mirage that very same month. Creator Erik Larsen had nothing to say about *Dragon* #22, except that, "I can get talked into anything."

• **Shadowline, Ink**

Congrats to Jim Valentino and the Shadowline bunch for the successful media coverage of *ShadowHawk* #18. The issue, which shipped last May, saw the title hero lose his long-fought battle with AIDS. The United Press International and Associated Press wires have all picked up the story, and a number of television networks in the Los Angeles area have covered the story and interviewed Valentino.

• **WildStorm Productions**

WildStorm warns you about the release of a major new title in either late '95 or early '96. Judging from the company's last major launch (*Gen*[13]), keep your eye out for it....A Voodoo/Zealot special, a Spartan mini-series and a four-ish WildStorm anthology are all due out sometime this summer.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS

Another heroine will soon join the LNS fold: the hypnotic Widow gets a new series and new company in August, as London Night takes her popular title over from Ground Zero Comics.

MALIBU COMICS

Captain America as leader of the UltraForce? Maybe, as hype surrounding the *Avengers/UltraForce* two-ish crossover has speculation flying all over the place. Malibu would neither confirm nor deny this rumored cool deal.

MARVEL COMICS

The Punisher goes "Over the Edge" when the final phase of Frank Castle plays itself out, as he plots to kill Nick Fury. It all begins in July's *Double Edge Alpha* (where, according to Marvel, "one of fandom's most beloved characters will die"), runs through most of July's Marvel Edge books, and concludes in August's *Double Edge Omega*....As a part of the company's 99-cent comic line starting in July, *Marvel: Fantastic Four* #1 ships that month, along with *Untold Tales of Spider-Man*. *Marvel: FF* stars The Thing and promises lots of guest stars. (Can anyone say *Marvel Two-in-One*?)....Wanna read about your favorite heroes in novel form? Courtesy of Boulevard Books and Byron Preiss Multimedia, is *Iron Man: The Armor Trap* by Greg Cox, and *Spider-Man: Carnage in New York* by David Michelinie and Dean Wesley Smith, coming in July and August, respectively. Forthcoming books include: *The Incredible Hulk: What Savage Beast* by Peter David, *Spider-Man: The Lizard Sanction* by Diane Duane, *The Ultimate Silver Surfer* (an anthology edited by Stan Lee) and *Fantastic Four: To Free Atlantis* by Nancy A. Collins....Check out the awesome Iron Man poster by Scott Easley, due out in July! It's worth the five bucks.

MAXIMUM PRESS

Alan Moore (*Watchmen*, *WildC.A.T.s*—wow, you don't get more divergent than that) will handle the writing chores for the next story arc for Maximum Press' flagship title, *Warchild*. The plan is for Moore to do a "Quentin Tarantino, fantasy, medieval, kick-ass action book" in the words of Extreme Entertainment President Rob Liefeld. Moore's story is planned for late '95 to early '96.... The Avengelyne Swimsuit book comes your way in August with never-before-seen photos of model Cathy Christian. The book will also feature artwork by Liefeld, Mike Deodato Jr., Dan Fraga and John Stinsman.

MILESTONE MEDIA

The people at Milestone would like to let all

Continued on page 30

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COMING THIS SUMMER FROM Topps

UP & COMING

KILIAN PLUNKETT

Someday Kilian Plunkett may meet his dream collaborator. But the 24-year-old Irishman laughingly predicts that you shouldn't hold your breath. "I'm a bit of a control freak. So my dream collaboration would probably be with myself."

Not that Plunkett is doing so bad as a solo act. His distinctive style of artistry has graced the insides of Dark Horse Comics' four-issue *Aliens: Labyrinth* mini-series, the covers of the three-issue movie adaptation of Corman Comics' *The Little Shop of Horrors* and the two-issue movie adaptation of *The Mask*.

"I'm not particularly flashy," says Plunkett of his approach to drawing. "I just try and make the stuff as well drawn as possible. I'm not entirely realistic but I always try and make things credible. Right now I'd have to say my style is really understated."

Plunkett, born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, grew up with the best of all comic book influences. "I was able to get my hands on some [Jack] Kirby and [Steve] Ditko reprint books from the states and, of course, we had *2000 A.D.* and all the things by [artists] Kevin O'Neil and Brian Bolland. The black and white things from Europe were a very big influence on me."

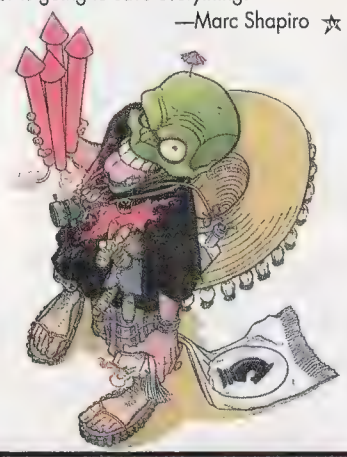
Plunkett entered the Deleary College of Art and Design at age 17 and began to think seriously about a career in comics. "I was always aware that you could make a living at it, but I finally decided to try and make a serious effort on my own."

While at college, he began submitting some samples to the likes of DC, Marvel and Dark Horse. "The things I was sending out were mostly aliens. I was getting over my [J.R.R.] Tolkien thing at the time so, unfortunately, there were a few hobbits floating around in my work. For the most part, the response was always, 'Right. Yeah, kid. Try again.' Dark Horse had rejected my samples but told me to try again in six months. But six months later, I was too busy trying not to get kicked out of college to do anything about their offer."

Plunkett graduated from college in early '93 and was immediately in what he describes as "the deep end" when Dark Horse came a calling with the offer to do *Aliens: Labyrinth*. Halfway through that, he did *Dark Horse Comics* #12-#13 for a 16-page Aliens lead-in story. He followed with an "8th Wonder" tale for *Dark Horse Presents* #85-#87, the two-issue *Mask* adaptation and covers for the majority of *Droids* issues. His other recent assignments include the covers for *Classic Star Wars: The Early Adventures* #8, the *Little Shop* covers and "a secret *Star Wars* six-issue series that I'm horribly late on."

And while Plunkett is, more often than not, working with color; he is quick to hearken back to his black-and-white roots when it comes to putting pencil to page. "If color ends up going on top of what I do, that's fine. But my attitude is that you can't just hope that the color is going to save everything."

—Marc Shapiro ☆



THE MASK ™ & © Dark Horse Comics

Continued from page 28

of the company's fans—and especially the retailers—know that after there was some confusion over the price of *Hardware* #29 (Milestone's first 99-cent Reader's Choice book, which was noted as costing 99 cents in large type on the cover, but also listed $2.50 in the cover price box), future Reader's Choice issues will clearly display only the 99-cent price. They apologize for any inconvenience experienced by the readers or retailers.

MIRAGE STUDIOS

This August, the Turtles meet up with Chicago's most beloved superhuman cop, the Savage Dragon, as they track down their old nemesis "Complete Carnage." The *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles/Savage Dragon Crossover* is an all-new crossover, which retails for $2.75, and continues in *Savage Dragon* #22.

NOW COMICS

Now Comics has announced that it has "temporarily suspended publication" of its line of comics. According to editor Joan Weis, Now plans to complete the solicited three-issue mini-series *Syphons: Sygate Strategem*. There are no definite plans for the company's licensed product The Green Hornet.

TEKNO•COMIX

Don't miss the penultimate chapter in Xander's destiny as he draws a step closer to finding out the truth about Malay in *Xander in Lost Universe* #0. This issue, featuring a Jae Lee cover, ships in July....It's the biggest fight since *Rocky III*, when Victorian Armored Mr. Hero takes on Modern Armored Mr. Hero in an old-fashioned duel. And join in on the interactive contest, by casting your vote to arm Mr. Hero for future fights. Check out July's *Mr. Hero* #9 for all the details.

VANGUARD COMICS

Popular Vertigo cover artist Dave McKean will be collaborating with illustrator Barron Storey on the *1995 Watch Annual*. This collection will also feature the alternative work of George Pratt, Bill Koeb and an introduction by Neil Gaiman. The collection, shipping in August, will be a 68-page prestige, black-and-white book, retailing for $5.95.

VEROTIK

This August, look for *Jaguar God* #0, which tells the beginning of the God's awesome tale by Glenn Danzig and Frank Teran, with a funky Frank Frazetta cover....Also shipping this August is the first ish of the ongoing *Satanika*, featuring your favorite satanic babe—y'know, the kind you'd just love to bring home to mom! Both of these killer issues are for you mature readers....Liam Sharp (Hulk) will be drawing a Danzig-written mini-series called *G.O.T.H.*, which stands for Government Operation Total Hate. About a top-secret scientific experiment that goes awry, the three-issue series will ship in the late fall of '95.

WARP GRAPHICS

The rumors are just flyin' at warp speed (Sorry!) about future Elfquest-related projects. Expect to see some of Wendy Pini's

™ & © Vanguard Comics

Elfquest art at the Michigan Ave. Gallery in Chicago, on July 1. Also, the September to November books starring your favorite li'l elves will feature a Treasure Quest Contest, offering a rather substantial cash prize. And finally, you might find your favorite *Elfquest* graphic novels and hardcovers at your local Wal-Mart starting this August. As more concrete details are available on any of these events, we'll be sure to let you know.

THREE PART MINI-SERIES

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SWORD OF THE DAMNED THING!

•Peter Stone
•Rodolfo Dimaggio
•Neal Adams
•Saw Nan
• Cory
•Beachum

ACCLAIM COMICS, INC.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY, BABY?

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FEMALE COMIC BOOK CHARACTER HAS BEEN LONG AND TOUGH... AND MANY BELIEVE IT'S NOT OVER YET

BY BETH HANNAN RIMMES

You've come a long way, superwoman. Or have you?

Gone are the days (mostly) of countless covers featuring helpless but beautiful female sidekicks in jeopardy. Today, most female comic characters are not helpless, but they are still drop-dead gorgeous and fight crime in high heels and tight, skimpy costumes. This sort of contradiction is not new. Rather than a steady, if perhaps slow, improvement in the portrayal of female characters over the years, there often seem to be more bad examples than good, or a regression for every achievement. It becomes difficult to say whether the portrayal of female characters has improved, and some argue that it hasn't.

"The traditional female-as-superhero's-girlfriend-and/or-hostage is pretty much the role all females were relegated to in the past," says writer-artist John Byrne (*Wonder Woman, She-Hulk, Babe*). "Even when they got powers, they were still cute and safe: Supergirl, Mary Marvel. They were never as powerful as the men."

THE WAY IT BEGAN

WONDER WOMAN

In the beginning, there was Superman (1938) and Batman (1939), but a major female superhero did not appear until 1941, with the debut of Wonder Woman. Created by Dr. William Moulton Marston, psychiatrist and feminist theorist, Wonder Woman was intended to be a role model. Before his death in 1947, he wrote, "Women's strong qualities have become despised. The obvious remedy is to create a feminine character with all the strength of a superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman."

While a physically strong character—"second only to Superman," current *Wonder Woman* writer-artist Byrne points out—Wonder Woman has been in more embarrassing situations than the Man of Steel, despite Marston's intentions.

That era ended when George Pérez revised Wonder Woman for her reintroduction to the DC Universe in 1986 after her "death" and rebirth in the previous year's *Crisis on Infinite Earths* maxiseries, a revision based on research into Greek mythology and culture to create a more intricate Amazon society. Pérez brought more mythological history into the Amazons' background, and had Princess Diana sent from her birthplace of Themyscira to Patriarch's World, to teach the Amazonian way of peace.

Byrne also plans to ignore the more embarrassing moments of her past during his *WW* tenure, and avoid creating new ones. "Paul Kupperberg, the editor, has what he calls 'The Superman/Batman Rule,'" says Byrne. "He says whenever you think about what you want to do with Wonder Woman, think if you would feel comfortable doing it with Superman or Batman."

LOIS LANE

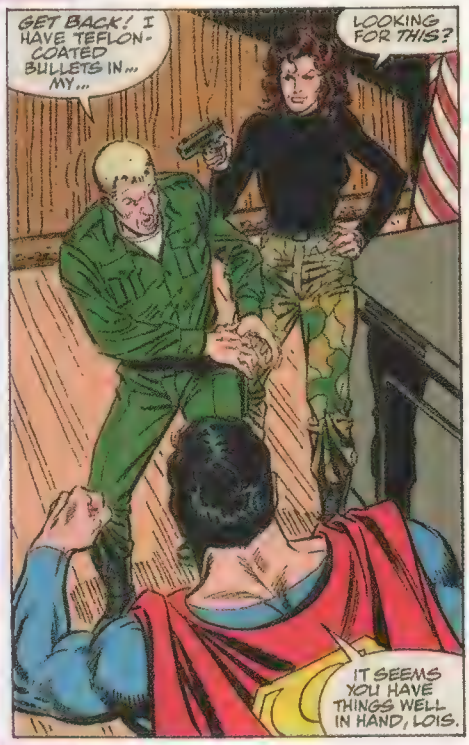
Another major, though not superpowered, female character predates Wonder Woman. Lois Lane debuted in 1938 with Superman, but her personality has been inconsistent over the years.

"I hated Lois when I was a kid," says Byrne, who revamped the post-*Crisis on Infinite Earths* Superman and his supporting cast, including Miss Lane. "Her main function seemed to be a pain in the butt and to get captured a lot. Years later, when I finally saw the [Max] Fleischer cartoons [from the 1930s], I said, 'Here's a Lois I like.' Here's a Lois who gets into trouble because she's pushing the envelope, not because she's being a ditz. I've often said it was Margot Kidder [who portrayed Lois in the recent films] who made me understand what Superman saw in Lois. I took a lot of my Lois from Margot Kidder's character."

Lois didn't even get top billing in her own book. *Superman's Girlfriend, Lois Lane* (1957) often featured fantasy stories about Lois and Superman being married.

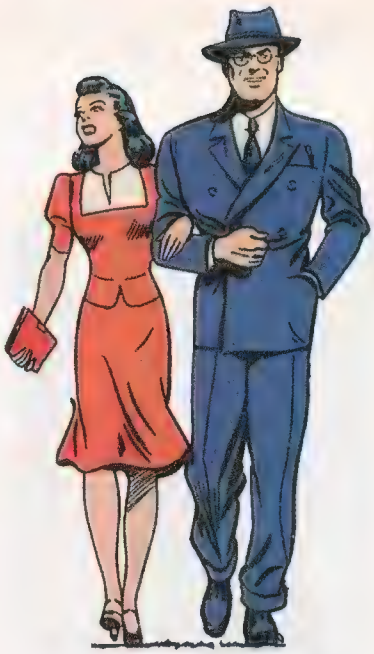
"Lois reflected the male perception of what women wanted," says Byrne. "If you go back to the very earliest stuff, Lois was the top reporter at the [*Daily*] *Planet* before Clark [Kent] turned up, so there was really no reason for her suddenly to turn into a wimp. But she was created right before [World War II], and during the war, the boys marched off and the girls marched into the factories. Women were allowed to have real jobs, and Lois reflected that. Then the boys came back and said, 'Back into the kitchen,' and it reflected that. She had a little pillbox hat and got tied up a lot. Then you get into the mid-'70s, and you have them trying to show Lois is liberated and a feminist by wearing hot pants."

However, she was still frequently rescued by Superman. Today's Lois is based on Byrne's revision—a woman who's smart, sassy and independent, and can take care of herself and maybe even rescue Superman once in a while.



The "armpiece" Lois Lane (top) has been replaced by the new, aggressive Lois (above).

Despite Marston's intentions and the example of the WWII-era Lois, there was not a surge of strong female role models after Wonder Woman; most of the superheroines that followed were watered-down versions of male heroes and/or sidekicks.



HEROINES THROUGH THE YEARS

From the late '40s to early '50s, female characters were basically pin-ups or cheesecake. The fact that male figures were no longer monopolizing the market did not make up for the less-than-favorable treatment of women. Some were featured in what was known as "good girl art"—comic books containing drawings of attractive, leggy, busty women. Often they were heroines. Others were "bad girls." Usually, they were villainesses trying to seduce heroes, but occasionally they had good motives, if bad methods. Characters like Phantom Lady (who always seemed to be getting tied up), Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, and Torchy (a funny book character often seen in black lingerie) all largely disappeared or were rewritten when Dr. Fredric Wertham's *Seduction of the Innocent* in 1954 accused comic books of corrupting youth. Due to an anti-comic book backlash that followed, comics were forced to be completely wholesome, which often meant boring women with frilly, ultra-feminine gadgets who had to be rescued by the heroes.

"In the '50s, comics were extremely conservative and [had] very much small-town values," says Denny O'Neil, group editor for the Batman titles. "In the '60s, they were kind of irreverent. We tend to be very good at reflecting the latest trends and fashions."

Batwoman (a.k.a. Kathy Kane), who debuted in *Detective Comics* #233 in 1956, is a prime example of "the weaker sex" fighting crime. Unlike Batman's climbing devices, smoke pellets or lock picks, her crime-fighting equipment included a "red shoulder-bag utility-case" containing tear gas perfume, smoke bomb lipstick, a periscope lipstick and a powder puff smoke screen.

WONDER WOMAN, SUPERMAN, CLARK KENT and LOIS LANE™ & © DC Comics

WOMEN IN COMICS

A "take-charge" Sue Richards (above), Mary Jane Watson-Parker (right), and Oracle (below).

BATGIRL

Like many other superheroines, Batgirl (a.k.a. Barbara Gordon) wasn't taken seriously. Batgirl made her comic book debut in 1967's *Detective Comics* #359 after being created for the *Batman* TV show. While Batman is the Caped Crusader, Batgirl's nicknames included the Bat-Beauty, the Chic Crime-Fighter, the Dominoed Dare-Doll and the Masked Maiden.

"I did not think she was a good female character," says O'Neil. "It's interesting that she was a brown belt in Judo; like, she's a girl, so she can't even be a black belt. They made her kind of a frilly, feminine superhero who did, I think, no credit to superheroes or feminism."

Barbara Gordon's situation has improved since then (even though she is now a paraplegic, after being shot by the Joker in 1988's *The Killing Joke*); her present state as Oracle, DC's premier computer hacker, has given importance and depth to her persona, and has brought her right in speed with the times.

INVISIBLE WOMAN

Batgirl is far from the only long-running superheroine who waited years—decades, in fact—to finally come into her own as a strong, multi-faceted character. In 1961 at Marvel Comics, the writer-artist team of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby began their ground-breaking work in realistic, problem-plagued characters with the Fantastic Four. This time, the female character not only had powers of her own rather than an imitation of the men's, she was also an integral part of the group.

"When I got to Sue Storm, I tried to think, what can she do that you don't see in other comics?" says Lee. "If she could be invisible, that would be fun, but I thought that might make her not valuable enough to the group. Then I thought, what if she had a force field also and she could protect the others and use the force field as a weapon? I really loved that and I felt that would make her definitely an equal partner. She'd be as valuable and as strong as the others."

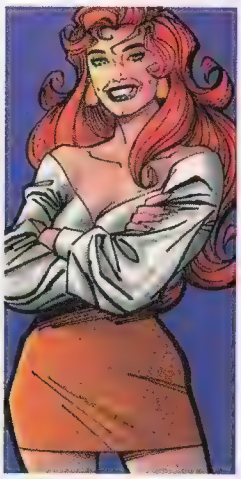
Byrne, who also had a writer-artist stint on *Fantastic Four* in the '80s, believes Sue is "the most powerful member of the group," but "Sue is a very hard character to write, because she has to be strong and self-propelling to be of interest, and she still has to be the 'mom' of the Marvel Universe."

While in the real world, women were campaigning for equal job opportunities, Sue broke ground by being traditional. A full-time mother-housewife-superheroine was unheard of and is still extremely rare today. However, even though she's Marvel's "mom," sweet Sue has been controversial. While the '70s women's movement tried to encourage terms like "women" rather than "girls" and status-neutral titles like "Ms.," Sue was still known as Invisible Girl until well into the '80s. Changing her name to Invisible Woman was debated in the letter columns before finally happening in *FF* #284 in 1986. Sue felt it was time to shed her "girl" status after boldly facing off the Hate-Monger, who had, in her words, "violated" her by taking over her mind and transforming her into the evil Malice.

"It did really reach a point where I said, we don't call them 'girls' anymore and this woman has had two children," says Byrne. [EDITOR'S NOTE: She lost the second child in a miscarriage in *FF* #267.] "It's probably a little past the point that we should be calling her a girl."

STRONG WOMEN

From the '70s on, however, several female characters have taken on the world—specifically, the world of men—in an uninhibited, unapologetic, and long-term manner. They include Marvel's Mary Jane Watson-Parker and She-Hulk, and DC's Catwoman, who were all accepted—albeit slowly—as empowered, strong-willed women.



MARY JANE

In the '70s, feminists were arguing that women had choices and should take charge of their lives rather than waiting for men. One example of an exuberant, life-on-her-own-terms comic book woman is not superpowered. When Mary Jane Watson greets Peter Parker (a.k.a. Spider-Man) with, "Face it, tiger. You just hit the jackpot," she means it.

"Mary Jane was hip, she was cocky, you couldn't dampen her spirit," says Mary Jane co-creator Lee. "I just *liked* her."

SHE-HULK

Another vibrant, independent character is Marvel's She-Hulk, but she didn't start out that way. Originally, as her name indicated, she was just a female and slightly weaker version of the Hulk, much like the Batwomen, Supergirls and Element Girls before her. The difference is she didn't stay that way for long.

"I credit [writer] Roger Stern with the transformation," says Byrne. "The book was called *The Savage She-Hulk* and everybody was stuck with that image: she has to tear her clothes and break tanks. Roger brought her into the Avengers and said, 'She should be having a good time.' Roger made her interesting. So I immediately stole her and put her in the *Fantastic Four*."

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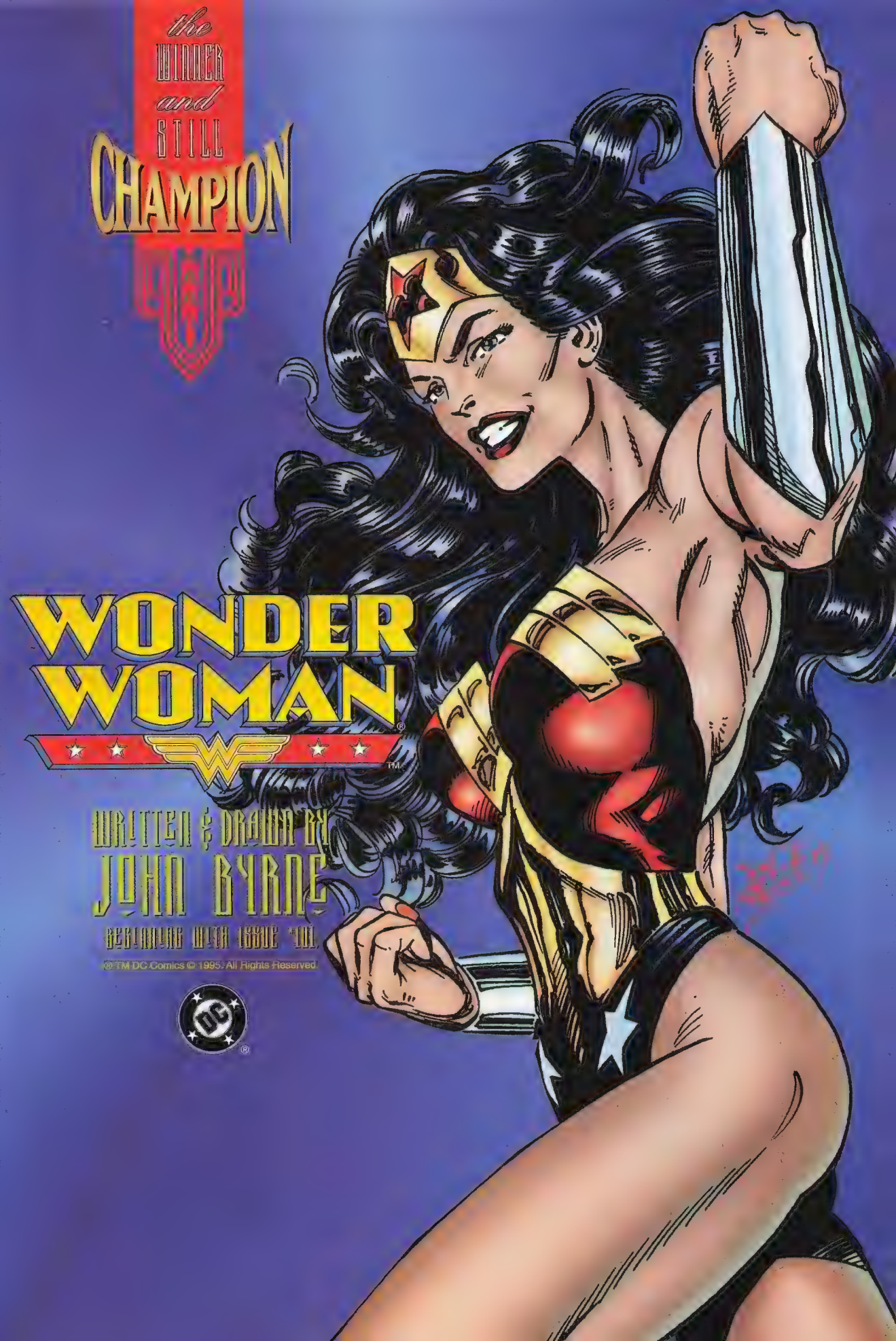
the WINNER and STILL CHAMPION
WONDER WOMAN
WRITTEN & DRAWN BY
JOHN BYRNE
BEGINNING WITH ISSUE #101
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DC

CATWOMAN

Strong, believable women in comics were beginning to emerge more regularly, if still slowly. Female solo titles were, and still are, rare. While always one of the favorite members of Batman's rogues gallery, Catwoman's main personality traits in the '40s were the cat motifs to her crimes and her attempts to seduce Batman into joining her. Now she has her own book.

"She's a criminal because she likes stealing things," says O'Neil. "She likes being smarter than other people. However, she has her own moral code. She will not wantonly take life. Very loyal to her friends, and very ruthless if you betray her. She is extremely tough and extremely tough-minded. Subtract the criminal angle, and I think Catwoman would be a pretty good role model."

BAD GIRLS

Not all female characters today fare as well. For every three-dimensional, credible character, there seems to be ten who are unbelievable and boring stereotypes.

"You have more average writers than good writers," says Chris Claremont, writer of *X-Men* and DC's *Sovereign Seven*, "and a lot of these people find it easier to go for the cliché, and just produce what everyone expects, rather than what might actually be interesting or different. The difference between a woman's character and a man's is that in the case of the woman's, the clichés are a bit more deeply ingrained."

The most popular cliché currently in vogue is the return of the Bad Girls, particularly among smaller publishers trying to attract attention in a crowded marketplace. For many of the characters, it seems as if their main superpower is being able to move without falling out of a skimpy costume. Antiheroines, such as Lady Death, seem more likely to get their own books, especially if they're well-endowed and barely dressed.

On her character's growing popularity, Francisca Pulido, vice president of Chaos! Comics, says, "Lady Death has a huge female following; women are happy that there's finally a character who is drop-dead gorgeous, but she's not a victim. She doesn't take crap from anyone, and stands up for herself."

"I think they make women characters a lot more amoral then they would allow male characters to act," says Sarah Dyer, creator of the book *Action Girl* for Slave Labor Press. "I don't care what anyone says about the men being in tight clothes. The women's costumes are so much more offensive. You would never dress male characters like that."

A GOOD-LOOKING FUTURE?

Despite the progress that's been made over the years, many industry pros are pessimistic about the future, particularly considering the current crop of books that feature female characters with bodies a *Penthouse* Pet would envy.

"There's a justification that [publishers] are just trying to appeal to our audience," says John Ostrander, currently writing *The Spectre* and *Eternal Warrior*. "There's a difference between appealing and pandering. There are comics that simply pander, and there have been more of those in the past five years, and that bothers me. What I find in some areas is this reactionary thing where all women look like models, wear skin-tight suits, have breasts larger than their heads, and wear spiked heels while running around doing battle. I don't think that works."

Others think the trend toward more believable female characters will continue, but slowly. "It's a very, very gradual thing," says O'Neil. Several professionals recognize that DC's Milestone line has brought many credible female characters to the comic world, with Rocket, star of *Icon*, in the forefront. In fact, the general consensus holds that *Icon* is clearly Rocket's book.

"I think the potential is a lot better now," says Dyer. "You have the potential to have a comic that's positive about women accepted, but not many people seem to be doing it. They just want to do something quick and easy. Comics are so strange. There's a lot of potential, but it seems for every step forward, you have two steps back."

A few think that the readers will grow bored with poorly characterized silicon babe characters and turn to better-written characters.

"I think all entertainment is self-regulating," says Lee. "Our job is to please the public. As soon as we stop pleasing the public, we stop earning money. If we're going in the wrong direction, people will stop buying the books, we'll realize we're wrong and we'll change what we're doing. It always works that way." ☆

Beth Hannan Rimmels wants to be Wonder Woman when she grows up, but she can't figure out the flying part.

Sure, they're good-lookin', but a new generation of independent and personality-driven females, such as Lady Death (left) and the Gen13 girls (right), will provide a balance for the silicon/no-brains babes.

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Ten tips and suggestions from **the industry's top writers** on how to improve your comic book writing skills

Learn from the Pros

By Craig Shutt

Make every word count. That's the one piece of advice that comic book writers would give to fledgling writers. It goes against every writer's desires and makes the stories more challenging to tell. But it's crucial if you're going to succeed at the fine art of writing a comic book.

After that, suggestions for new writers diverge greatly. Each writer creates and formats his tales differently. Some prefer the Marvel Comics method, where the writer's basic plot is laid out by the artist and then returned to the writer, who adds dialogue to the finished artwork. Others prefer the DC Comics or "full-script" approach, where the writer scripts each panel's action and dialogue before giving it to the artist, sometimes allowing the artist to combine or expand sequences to incorporate visual ideas.

"There are no rules," says Stan Lee, who would know if there were. Even Lee, who originated the so-called Marvel approach, says he doesn't prefer that format over the "full-script" style, which he followed early in his career. "There are so many variables and so many things that are involved, especially the artist you're working with. You can't give any rules for someone to follow."

Just because there are lots of ways to write right doesn't mean there aren't 10 times as many ways to do it wrong. Boiled down here are the suggestions and tips from a dozen comic book writers about 10 key elements that every writer should consider before the fingers touch the keyboard.

1. Make Every Word Count

"All beginners are verbose," says John (*Wonder Woman*) Byrne. "I think it must be genetically encoded." Many write drawn-out captions to describe what's in the artwork, he explains, rather than playing off the art to enhance the story.

James (*Starman*) Robinson knows the feeling. "Being English, I felt the looming shadow of [fellow British writer] Alan Moore when I started writing," he says. "So I tended to be overly wordy. Most people are."

New writers want to cram in all the jokes, funny business and cool scenes they've been wanting to write all their lives.

"You want to fit in your favorite little bits, but it's so hard to work them in smoothly," says Jerry (*The Power of Shazam!*) Ordway. "You have to shrug it off and tell the story."

2. Have Something to Say

"You can teach the writing craft, but you can't teach a writer to have something interesting to say or to offer a unique point of view," says Mark (*Flash*) Waid. "A writer should bring some genuine emotion to the story. He should relate the character's feelings to something that the reader has felt. If you can do that, you're ahead of 80 percent of the people writing today."

That's also going to help the first-time writer's marketability, says Kurt (*Marvels*) Busiek. "Write a story that only you can tell, from a perspective the editor has never seen before," he advises. "Show him you're thinking about the character in a totally new way, one that he can only get from you."

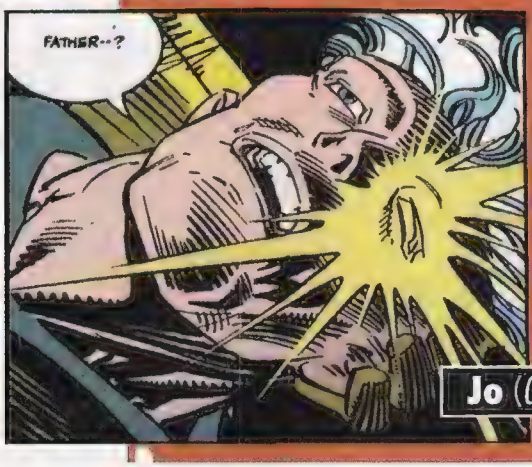
He suggests looking for elements in the character that are unique, due to background, origin, supporting cast or setting. "That will impress the editor," he says. "He sees pretty good stories about his character all the time. He wants to see something new." (For more on how to sell your newly improved stories, see the sidebars.)

3. Dream Big, Think Small

"New writers always want to do everything under the sun in their first issue," says Fabian (*X-Men*) Nicieza. "They want to write the X-Men versus the Fantastic Four versus Galactus right away. It's absurd to expect to sell that."

Instead, he suggests, writers should "dream big, by always having big ideas ready when they'll fit, but think small, and do personal, character-related stories. Play up unique angles to the villains or the supporting cast that show a new side to the hero."

Jo (*Glory*) Duffy agrees. "Don't reveal who Cable's parents are in your first story,"



"Don't reveal who Cable's parents are in your first story. Everybody wants to make a splash, but that won't happen the first time out. Besides, it leaves you nothing to do in the second issue."

Jo (*Glory*) **Duffy**

she laughs. "Everybody wants to make a splash, but that won't happen the first time out. Besides, it leaves you nothing to do in the second issue."

4. Excite Your Artist

No matter what format is used, the writer's initial audience isn't the reader, says Peter (*The Incredible Hulk*) David. It's the comic's other collaborators.

"I see so many scripts from professionals that are told in a cut-and-dried style, and that's not enough to excite anybody," he says. "The first thing I have to do is excite the editor, so he can't wait to give the story to the artist. Then I have to excite the artist so he can't wait to start drawing it. If your writing doesn't generate that excitement, you risk the story falling flat."

Most writers say they provide as much detail in their plot or script as they can, including body language, lighting, settings and background detail; many even attach reference photos or drawings. "I'd rather have things ignored or left out than risk not giving the artist enough to work with," says Robinson.

Writers agree the best approach is to talk with the artist to determine what he wants to draw. Ordway, the artist, concurs: "If I'm working with someone for the first time, I like to talk it over with them. It can't always happen that way, but that's best." Byrne agrees, pointing out that full scripts work best when the writer doesn't know who the artist will be.

Some writers, notably Mike Baron and Keith Giffen, are known to supply stick-figure drawings to accompany their scripts, which EC editor Harvey Kurtzman was renowned for doing.

5. Start Big

Chuck (*Detective Comics*) Dixon has a basic rule of thumb: "My first scene has to have violence," he laughs. "That's what my readers expect from me." While not every writer refines the point that closely, they all agree that the opening splash can make or break the story. "It's the second cover," Ordway says.

Adds Busiek, "The opening page has to involve the reader right away. That can be either an explosion or a hissing, sparking fuse. If you aren't going to hand the readers something big right away, promise them something that engages their attention and makes them want to read on."

That's also true for the end of an issue, says Jeff (*Bone*) Smith. Since *Bone* is a serial, Smith knows approximately where each issue starts. So he decides where he wants it to end, and what the main point of the issue is, and then fills in the middle. "I have to find that payoff," he explains. "The reader has to turn the last page and want that next issue real bad."

"My first scene has to have violence. That's what my readers expect from me."

Chuck (*Detective Comics*) **Dixon**

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6. Pace Yourself

Each writer has his own approach to outlining the story to ensure a smooth pace. Busiek, for instance, writes a two-page synopsis, breaks that down into the number of pages each scene will require, and then moves things around as needed. Waid decides on his opening and closing scenes and determines what the story's themes will be. Then he pulls up a 22-page template from his computer, types out a few sentences describing each page, and plays with that.

Byrne starts on page one and writes his story, then goes back and rearranges, deletes and edits as needed. "I love to do the restructuring," he says. "That's the most organic way of writing."

Nicieza, working with the Marvel method, likes to provide a scene-by-scene synopsis, which he then fleshes out with the editor before sending it to the artist for page breakdowns.

Robinson starts with an outline that he breaks into individual panels. He then writes out all his dialogue to see how it flows and if the pace is working. "It's difficult to pace a comic correctly," he says. "Pages can easily get allocated badly."

He does have one rule of thumb. "I try to place my 'money' shots on the left-hand page," he says. "I want the reader to turn the page and be surprised."

Good pacing comes via instinct and experience, they agree. Still, basic dramatic structure offers the best pacing template for a new writer to follow, says David.

That structure, he explains, divides any story into three distinct acts. Act One presents the basic story premise, ending with a turning point that serves as the catalyst to set the story in motion. "That may come as early as page one," he points out. Act Two consists of the bulk of the story, which continues until it reaches another turning point, which essentially rushes the story to its conclusion. That brings on the climax and Act Three, which resolves the story. This basic structure applies not only to each issue, he adds, but to entire story arcs.

"The biggest mistake I see new writers make is that they have no clue as to what makes a good story," David says. "Two characters fighting is not a story. It has to have a point. A fight over a misunderstanding can have a story developed from it, but it isn't a story on its own."

Duffy sums it up succinctly. "Every comics story has to have a beginning, middle and end. Even if it's a chapter of a bigger story, it has to have a starting point, a climactic point and a drop-off." Even so, Nicieza warns, don't fall back on a set approach. "I found a system that worked, and I used it all the time," he says. "Then I realized I was becoming too formulaic. You have to mix it up."

Some writers also maintain personal guidelines to keep them from overwriting any page. Waid suggests having no more than one "big thing" occur on a page, and no more than one action taking place per panel. He also recommends aiming for five panels on a page, allowing one panel to serve as the primary focus. Ordway says he likes to have no more than seven things happen on a page.

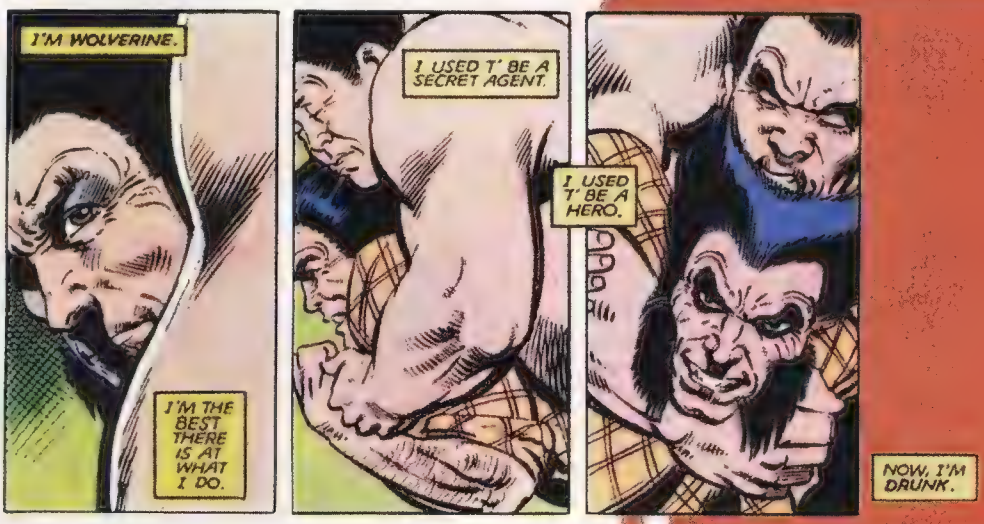
All of the writers subscribe to the well-known Balloon Capacity Rule: No word balloon should have more dialogue in it than can fit onto two lines of a standard typewritten page. If it goes longer, split the copy into two balloons. Many writers also number the page's dialogue balloons, so their order is apparent on the actual script.

7. Explain Your Characters

Describing the main characters to a new reader can be cumbersome, but it can't be avoided. "That explanation is the most important thing in writing a comic," says Waid. "A good writer will find a way to work it in seamlessly. I read comics today where the characters aren't even identified by name, and that just makes my head explode." As an example taken from Waid's own work, he usually opens up every issue of *The Flash*

Describing the main characters to a new reader can be cumbersome, but it can't be avoided. "A good writer will find a way to work it in seamlessly. I read comics today where the characters aren't even identified by name, and that just makes my head explode."

Mark *(Flash)* **Waid**



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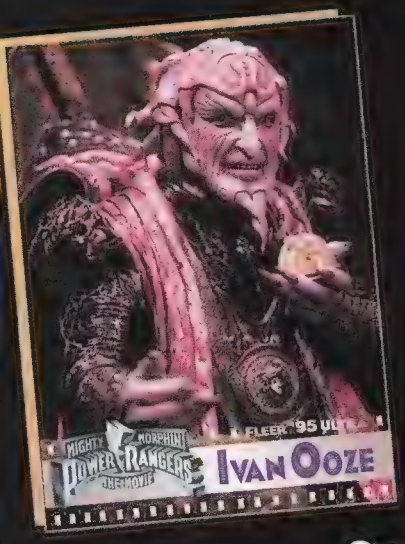

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How to Sell It

Writing a comic story and selling a comic story are two different things, writers point out. Here are some key suggestions on how to make that sale:

1. Make Contact. Try to meet an editor at a convention so he'll have a face to put with the name on the submission. Target a specific editor whose books you enjoy.

Peter David suggests sending submissions to the assistant editor. That person receives far fewer and may be able to invest more time into championing a good writer. Chuck Dixon advises that writers mail material by Fed Ex or return receipt requested, so that the editor has to sign for it, to ensure it reaches the right person.

Admitting that he will regret saying it, Dixon also suggests that novices ask a favorite writer to send a copy of a used script to offer a workable, professional format.

2. Keep it Short. Editors are too busy to read full scripts. Mark Waid suggests a cover letter with a one-paragraph explanation of the story or series; a one-page, double-spaced synopsis that starts strong; a page of character summaries; and a one-page overview of the first three issues or so. Most companies offer guidelines—use them (see other sidebar, page 44).

3. Listen to Criticism. "If you just want me to reconfirm your greatness, don't ask me to criticize your writing," says Jo Duffy. "Only one in a hundred novice writers are interested in doing the work that is required to become a good writer." Adds David, "Don't take criticism personally. The story is being rejected, not the writer. Too many writers invest too much self-esteem in their writing."

4. Don't Pitch the X-Men. "The number-one mistake new writers make is wanting to write the most popular character," Dixon says. Instead, he suggests, "Find a character that everyone has ignored and make it shine."

Two great starting points are Marvel's *What If?* and DC's *Showcase*, which rotate creators and offer short, targeted stories on almost any character. Adds Fabian Nicieza, "Eight-pagers and back-ups let you flex your muscles, and they show you can focus on telling the story."

5. Link with an Artist. Pitching an entire package—story and art—is the only way to interest some smaller publishers, which, in turn, may get the attention of the bigger ones, too. James Robinson, for instance, points out that both he and fellow writer Neil Gaiman came to DC's attention due to their independent projects. "It won't make you a lot of money, but it gets you into print," he says. It also showcases narrative and dialogue skills.

6. Be a Solution. "Attitude is as important as talent," stresses Jerry Ordway. "You won't find work by putting down the editor's current writers. You need to show more class than that. Editors need to create a team they can work with." John Ostrander agrees. "The writer's job is to make the editor's life easier. If you want to be treated like a professional, act like one."

7. Keep At It. "Be persistent," Stan Lee advises. "You'll have more setbacks than successes early on. Don't let it stop you. Keep on writing."

—CS

with something like "My name is Wally West. I'm The Flash...the fastest man alive."

But readers don't need to know everything, stresses John (*The Spectre*) Ostrander. "There is a school of thought that says that every issue should be accessible to the first-time reader," he admits. "But after the first four or five issues, the trend usually is to lose readers. So you're trying to retain your audience, not introduce the character to new readers. You don't have to reintroduce him each issue."

There are key times when new readers are sampling the book, he stresses, as happened with *Spectre* during DC's "Zero Hour" promotion. In the #0 issue and several subsequent ones, Ostrander wrote single-issue, stand-alone stories that then tied into the next four-story arc. "Be aware of when new readers are trying to jump on, and make those [stories] good entry points."

Crossovers are one of those times, he notes. "Those can double or triple the reader base, and if you can retain even 10 percent of that [added] audience, you'll grow," he points out. "Writers complain about a crossover, but they should stop fighting it and make it work for them."

It's always better to allow the artist to show who the character is than for the writer to tell it, Busiek notes. "Don't be boring or predictable about exposition," he says. "There are many ways to show who your characters are." Adds Dixon, "It's no accident that so many X-Men stories start off in the Danger Room [where the team practices their skills]."

At the same time, Busiek warns, "Don't waste the first three pages showing off your characters' powers and then start your story. Make that action integral to what's going to follow."

8. Vary Dialogue Patterns

"The defining quality of a good writer is the ability to write good dialogue," says Lee. "It makes the characters come alive and makes the readers feel that they know the characters. I consider it to be of paramount importance."

> "The defining quality of a good writer is the ability to write good dialogue. It makes the characters come alive and makes the readers feel that they know the characters. I consider it to be of paramount importance."
>
> **Stan (The Man) Lee**

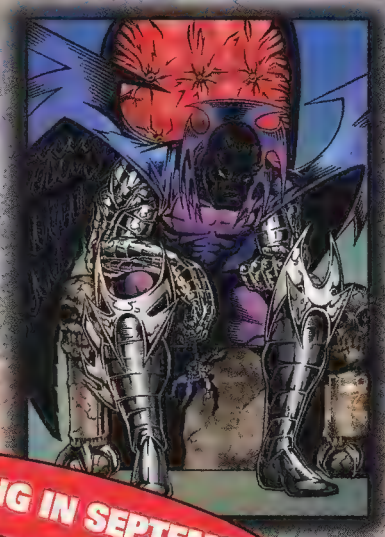
Bone's Smith agrees. "Novice and pro writers alike tend toward sophomoric, unnatural dialogue. Two people in a scene should come across as two brains, two personalities. Too often, everybody sounds alike."

Duffy suggests outlining the character's background, including education, religion and profession, and using those cues to create a distinct speech pattern. Waid suggests, "Go to the mall and listen to people. I can't tell you how excited I become when I hear a new phrase or buzzword that I can use." He keeps a small notebook with him to jot down ideas or phrases he hears.

"Anyone can dialogue a couple of comics," says Waid, who is in demand for his dialoguing skills. "But can they do 100 and make each one distinctive? Not everyone talks in the same cadence and tells the same kind of joke. It's a much tougher discipline than you think."

Several writers suggest that dialogue should be said aloud, because words sound and read differently. Furthermore, Busiek points out that the same words will have different meanings coming from different characters if

Hot Wire. Cold Metal.



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Submission Contacts

Here's where to send stuff. You should send for the publisher's writing guidelines before sending any material. In most cases, guidelines won't be sent if you don't include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A S.A.S.E. will also speed up feedback on submissions. Always include one.

- **Archie Comics:** Victor Gorelick, Managing Editor, 325 Fayette Ave., Mamaroneck, NY 10543.
- **Acclaim Comics:** Don Perlin, Vice President, 275 Seventh Ave., 14th Floor, New York City, NY 10001.
- **Caliber Press:** Joe Martin, 11904 Farmington Rd., Livonia, MI 48150.
- **Dark Horse Comics:** Submissions Editor, 10956 S.E. Main St., Milwaukie, OR 97222.
- **DC Comics:** Submissions Editor, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. (Specify writer's guidelines for DC Universe or Vertigo titles.)
- **Fantagraphics Books:** Submissions Editor, 7563 Lake City Way, Seattle, WA 98115. (Reviews only complete packages.)
- **Gladstone:** Submission Editor, Box 2079, Prescott, AZ 86302. (Include a daytime phone number if you want quick feedback. No guidelines available)
- **Image Comics:** Brent Braun, Image Comics, 2400 E. Katella Ave., Suite 1065, Anaheim, CA 92806. (Submissions are copied and forwarded to all Image studios.)
- **Kitchen Sink Press:** Submissions Editor, 310 Riverside Dr., Northampton, MA 01060.
- **Malibu Comics:** Larry Reynosa, Submissions Editor, 26707 Agoura Rd., Calabasas, CA 91302.
- **Marvel Comics:** 387 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016. (Will not read unsolicited material. Write the editor handling the proposed character and ask to make a proposal. Be able to sum it up in four or five sentences.)
- **Milestone Media:** Matt Wayne, 119 W. 23rd St., Suite 406, New York, NY 10011. (Not actively seeking submissions. No guidelines available.)
- **Slave Labor Graphics:** Submissions Editor, 983 S. Bascom Ave., San Jose, CA 95128. (Reviews only complete packages. No guidelines available.)

—CS

they've been developed well, and body language can affect meaning, too. "What's at the core of the character is the key to understanding how he talks and what he'll do."

9. Find Your Own Style

"It's difficult to ape someone else in a natural way," says Lee. "Writers have to create their own style." Adds Ostrander, "Writers should write what they know—but they know a lot more than they think. Superheroes' reactions to circumstances will be the same as a normal person's reaction in many cases. And the best fantasy has one foot grounded in reality."

> "If you study only comics, you may produce stuff that's as good or even better than current comics. But you won't create stuff that's different. Creators always should be striving to do something different. Otherwise, they're dead."

Most believe that writers need to find influences further afield than comic books. "If you study only comics, you may produce stuff that's as good or even better than current comics," says David. "But you won't create stuff that's different. Creators always should be striving to do something different. Otherwise, they're dead."

A key problem with novice writers, Ostrander notes, is that "They don't sit and think or feel things all the way through. They don't follow up on all the ramifications that an action creates."

Writers also agree that there's no percentage in trying to target an audience. "The readership may be younger, or it may be really devoted [as in the case of *Elfquest* or *Star Trek* titles], but you don't want to target a specific audience," says Ostrander. "You end up writing down to your readers or producing less than you're capable of. I owe the readers the best story I can do every time around."

10. Be Ready to Compromise

"Comic books are an endeavor of compromises, and you have to get used to that," warns David. That's particularly true at Marvel and DC, where some characters are older than the writers.

"Always be ready to fight for something that makes your story better, but don't fight out of pride because someone wants to change your story," he advises. There often is not a right or wrong answer. In some instances, the editors are watching out for licenses, other comics featuring the characters and many other elements unknown to the writer.

On the other hand, Busiek warns, new writers sometimes are ready to compromise before they have to. "If you figure you can't do a story before the editor tells you so, you might have cut yourself off from a great story. Don't overthink things."

Ultimately, all the suggestions boil down to one key point. "Write something that excites you," says Lee. "That's what I've always done. If your writing excites you, there's a good chance that it will excite others." ★

Craig Shutt, who interviewed John Byrne for issue #47, doesn't write comics. But he knows a good one when he sees it.

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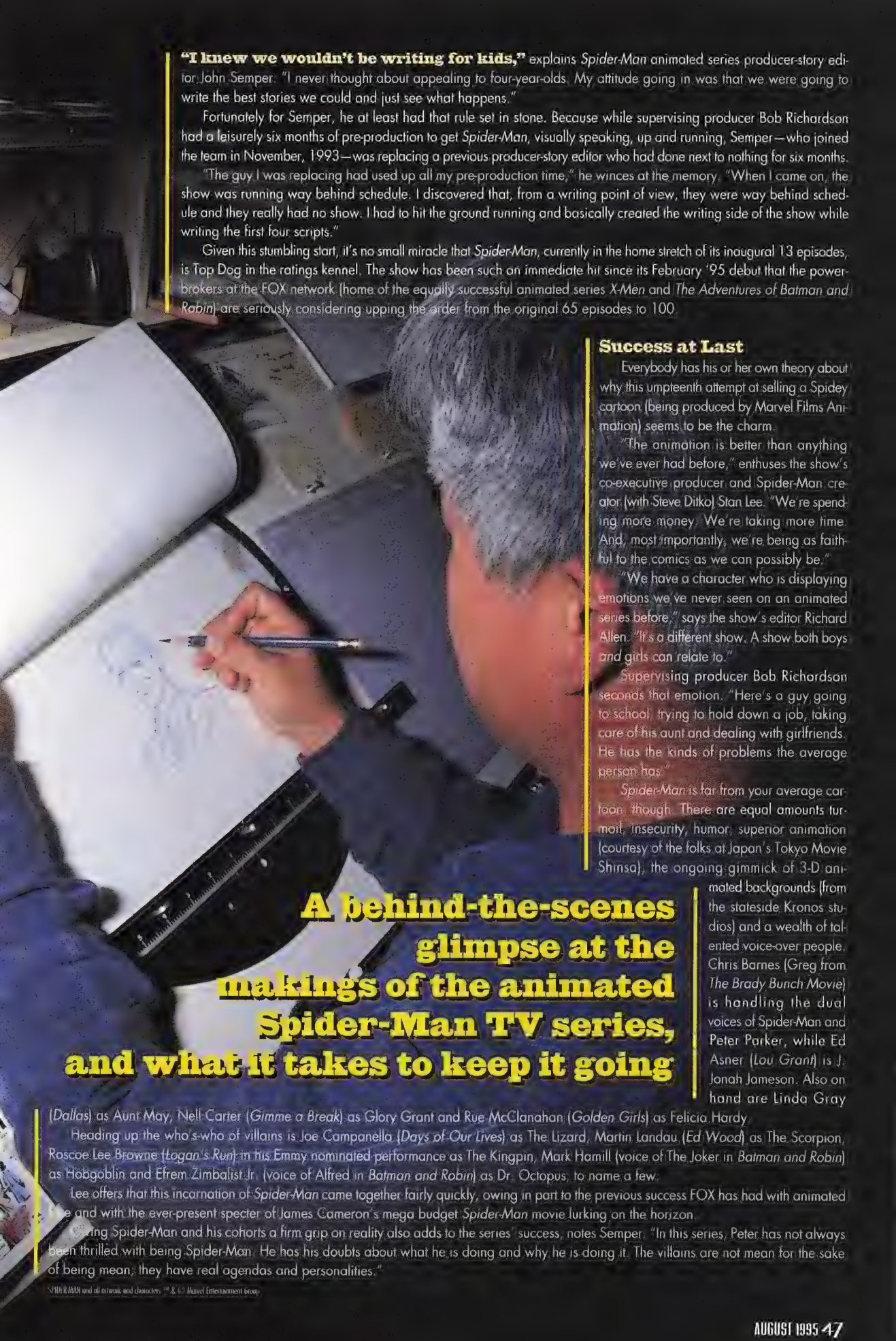
A New Spin

By Marc Shapiro • Photos By Al Ortega



A behind-the-scenes glimpse at the makings of the animated Spider-Man TV series, and what it takes to keep it going

"I knew we wouldn't be writing for kids," explains *Spider-Man* animated series producer-story editor John Semper. "I never thought about appealing to four-year-olds. My attitude going in was that we were going to write the best stories we could and just see what happens."

Fortunately for Semper, he at least had that rule set in stone. Because while supervising producer Bob Richardson had a leisurely six months of pre-production to get *Spider-Man*, visually speaking, up and running, Semper—who joined the team in November, 1993—was replacing a previous producer-story editor who had done next to nothing for six months.

"The guy I was replacing had used up all my pre-production time," he winces at the memory. "When I came on, the show was running way behind schedule. I discovered that, from a writing point of view, they were way behind schedule and they really had no show. I had to hit the ground running and basically created the writing side of the show while writing the first four scripts."

Given this stumbling start, it's no small miracle that *Spider-Man*, currently in the home stretch of its inaugural 13 episodes, is Top Dog in the ratings kennel. The show has been such an immediate hit since its February '95 debut that the powerbrokers at the FOX network (home of the equally successful animated series *X-Men* and *The Adventures of Batman and Robin*) are seriously considering upping the order from the original 65 episodes to 100.

Success at Last

Everybody has his or her own theory about why this umpteenth attempt at selling a Spidey cartoon (being produced by Marvel Films Animation) seems to be the charm.

"The animation is better than anything we've ever had before," enthuses the show's co-executive producer and Spider-Man creator (with Steve Ditko) Stan Lee. "We're spending more money. We're taking more time. And, most importantly, we're being as faithful to the comics as we can possibly be."

"We have a character who is displaying emotions we've never seen on an animated series before," says the show's editor Richard Allen. "It's a different show. A show both boys *and* girls can relate to."

Supervising producer Bob Richardson seconds that emotion. "Here's a guy going to school, trying to hold down a job, taking care of his aunt and dealing with girlfriends. He has the kinds of problems the average person has."

Spider-Man is far from your average cartoon, though. There are equal amounts turmoil, insecurity, humor, superior animation (courtesy of the folks at Japan's Tokyo Movie Shinsa), the ongoing gimmick of 3-D animated backgrounds (from the stateside Kronos studios) and a wealth of talented voice-over people. Chris Barnes (Greg from *The Brady Bunch Movie*) is handling the dual voices of Spider-Man and Peter Parker, while Ed Asner (*Lou Grant*) is J. Jonah Jameson. Also on hand are Linda Gray (*Dallas*) as Aunt May, Nell Carter (*Gimme a Break*) as Glory Grant and Rue McClanahan (*Golden Girls*) as Felicia Hardy.

Heading up the who's-who of villains is Joe Campanella (*Days of Our Lives*) as The Lizard, Martin Landau (*Ed Wood*) as The Scorpion, Roscoe Lee Browne (*Logan's Run*) in his Emmy nominated performance as The Kingpin, Mark Hamill (voice of The Joker in *Batman and Robin*) as Hobgoblin and Efrem Zimbalist Jr. (voice of Alfred in *Batman and Robin*) as Dr. Octopus, to name a few.

Lee offers that this incarnation of *Spider-Man* came together fairly quickly, owing in part to the previous success FOX has had with animated fare and with the ever-present specter of James Cameron's mega budget *Spider-Man* movie lurking on the horizon.

Giving Spider-Man and his cohorts a firm grip on reality also adds to the series' success, notes Semper. "In this series, Peter has not always been thrilled with being Spider-Man. He has his doubts about what he is doing and why he is doing it. The villains are not mean for the sake of being mean; they have real agendas and personalities."

SPIDER-MAN and all artwork and characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

And if anything from the current Spidey comics makes it into the series, it is purely an unfortunate accident.

"The new stuff tends to be a lot darker and there's only so much darkness that I want to bring to Saturday morning television," says Semper. "Personally, I don't want this show to become *Batman: The Animated Series*. We decided early on that we would bring the joking, jovial Spider-Man to the screen. It's only recently that we've had to deal with the strange, violent, depressing Spider-Man and I'm not so sure that's really working."

Correcting History

There have been four previous attempts to do a Spider-Man animated series, dating back to 1967 with the original *Spider-Man* half-hour show.

When Richardson and Semper jumped in to give the current incarnation a go, it was with the understanding that things would be done quite differently. Richardson and his staff of visual pros used their pre-production time to design characters that would be animation friendly.

For Semper and his two main writers during the first season, Stan Berkowitz and Mark Hoffmeier, the trick was to make *Spider-Man* as comic-book-like as Lee and the folks at FOX wanted. Which, Semper recalls, was not an easy task.

"If this show had been a literal adaptation of the comic books, it would be a pretty lousy show. The comics are great as comics and are the main reason why this show is here. But you cannot bring a comic to the screen as a comic, without all kinds of strange things happening. Dramatically, the comics are not complete. Characters are badly motivated a lot of the time and they get involved in stories that are quite unrealistic. When we were preparing this show we realized that once these characters started to move, we had to flesh out their worlds a little bit better."

Once secure in his position, Semper made his first demand of the combined FOX-Marvel forces. "The first thing I did was make them buy me a complete collection of Spider-Man comics. They had this idea that armed with six trade paperbacks, I was going to be able to create a 65-episode series. I told them no, invest the money. If nothing else, we'll need the books for reference."

Story-slinger John Semper

Richardson, in the meantime, was espousing the notion that, in order for this *Spider-Man* to work, it had to be unlike your typical Saturday morning cartoon show.

"In effect, what we had to do was make mini-movies. We had to take the Spider-Man Universe and play it out like it was live-action on the big screen. We set the series in New York City and we wanted to capture the reality of the city. We went so far as to set up maps in the work area to make sure our settings were consistent with the actual city. There's a certain reality on a show like this and we felt that, if we did our job right on that front, the fantastic nature of the characters that show up would make the stories all the more interesting."

In the meantime, Semper had gotten his comics and, as '93 moved into '94, the story editor began—through researching more than 30 years of Spider-lore—building the foundation of the *Spider-Man* series. "I was able to take those threads of character and plot that meandered through all those years of Spider-Man and bring them together in nice, tight half-hour adventures."

Semper's bible for the series has focused more heavily on drama and human (or even inhuman) interaction. Consequently, Semper found himself tinkering with many of the established Spider-Man characters, which opened up the show to controversy.

"If you look at the women in the Spider-Man Universe, you find that they've been pretty two-dimensional and there were not many strong women in Spider-Man [lore] until the late '80s. I really wanted to bring strong women into the series and I felt, symbolically, Aunt May would be a good place to start. In the series, she is not dottering and weak [as she's portrayed in the comics], but fully capable of taking care of herself.

"Felicia has always been a pretty strong character," continues Semper, "but I added the fact that she's wealthy and that she has a whole different way of looking and behaving. We're also playing Mary Jane as a much stronger and interesting character. In the comics she was pretty much all over the place; from party girl/bimbo to bad girl and then as a sort of yuppie wife. But, in order to do good dramatic stories, we felt we had to lock the character in one way. So we've made her a drama student who knows her own mind and,

The animated Spidey faces some shocking foes

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as the episodes have unfolded, we've seen her develop into someone who is very adventurous and aggressive."

Semper offers that the decision in regards to the male characters on the show was to "play them much closer to the comic books. The challenge was to lock onto a single personality for each one and stay with it.

"Peter Parker is a good example of the kind of thing we've done. In the comic books, Peter has had as many as five different personalities over the years. He's not a nerd in the show. We've made him pretty much the guy he was in the '80s when it was not uncommon for him to have a lot of women in his life but could not make things work because he was also Spider-Man. We haven't made him a total psychological wreck in the series but we've made it plain that he still has some drawbacks."

Christopher Barnes as Peter Parker

Film Processing

Semper quickly knocked out the first four half-hour episodes of *Spider-Man*. But what he quickly discovered was that "tight, half-hour adventures" were not feeding his creative spirit. "What I learned early on was that a half-hour episode of Spider-Man was not a very satisfying experience. It was like we were coming in on the third act and we were missing quite a lot. So I began writing two-parters which has resulted in more complete stories."

The behind-the-scenes care and feeding of just one episode of Spider-*Man* takes approximately six months from cradle to tube. And, reflects Semper, it all starts with the writing.

"...here comes the Spider-Man!"

"It basically takes a month to write the script. One week to do the draft. Then everybody looks at it, hates it and throws it back in your face for a rewrite. Then you rewrite it and they still hate it but they throw it back in your face with a little less force. After about a month it works."

At which point Richardson and his army of storyboarding whizzes take over and, over a period of four to six weeks, break the script down for animation. "Basically a script is modified at the storyboarding stage. Unless a script is more than a hundred pages long, it can only tell the animators so much. So what we do is design some fast-cutting, dynamic shots that will cut together well between the 3-D and 2-D shots and make sure that what Kronos does here in the states will match what they do to the character animation in Japan."

Then it's off to the respective animation places where, in anywhere from 2-3 months, the animation is done. After that? Well it's back to the states where *Spider-Man* becomes editor Richard Allen's headache.

"We're getting retakes in today that are part of an episode that is due to air this coming Saturday," says the perpetually cheerful Allen. "They may not work out and we're running out of time, so I've already pulled a backup scene from a previous episode that I can drop in in an emergency."

Allen, with the aid of the most modern, computer-based editing equipment, has a week to take out the holes and make the transitions work. It's not, as one would imagine, all smooth sailing.

"I've had animation come back with the heads of the characters missing from the scene," he groans good-naturedly. "I've had to flop scenes to make them work. The animation people are good. They're the best I've seen in a long time. But sometimes we get things back where there is no rhyme or reason of how they came up with what they did. And then we have to make it work. We simply don't have the time or the option of sending something back to Japan to be fixed. We have to fix it here."

Making the Grade

Semper, a refreshingly candid individual, assesses the first seasons' episodes. Given the rushed nature of his duties, the story editor claims to be more pleased with the results than not. "I thought the opening episode with The Lizard went real well. The Venom three-parter and The Scorpion story also came out particularly well. The Hobgoblin story was a problem because we were doing that villain before we were doing The Green Goblin. That was one of the few decisions my predecessor made that I was stuck with. Quite frankly, I don't think Hobgoblin is a very strong villain, so coming up with a good story for him was tough."

The producer-story editor very much wanted Spider-Man's first season to kick off with a mammoth arc of a multi-episode story. But the hectic nature of getting Spider-Man out of the blocks prohibited that. Now Semper warns that the second season will be the charm.

"We're going to do a 13-part, season-long story in which Spider-Man has this one big problem that he has to deal with. Without giving too much away, Spider-Man's life is being threatened in a specific way and he's got to find a way of dealing with it. In the first two episodes, Spider-Man will go up against a group of villains called The Insidious Six. After that, all kinds of villains will appear and gang up on him. Basically, what the second season will be is an animated version of the movie *D.O.A.* [where a poisoned man searches for his killer before dying]."

He further reports that season three "will be mostly two-part adventures" and will "set the stage for a big battle that will hopefully happen in a season four."

And while hope for the further adventures of *Spider-Man* springs eternal, Semper remains committed to the same approach that he brought with him to the show.

"Hey, I have no ego about this. In the past, what has gone wrong with Spider-Man is that they've taken this wonderful character and tried to do dumb cartoon shows based on him. I make no bones about why I'm here. I'm here to bring the comic book to life, to the best of my ability." ☆

Marc Shapiro, who interviewed 17-year-old wonder Trent Kaniuga for issue #47, swings from a web. Take a look, overhead. Hey, there, there goes Marc Shapiro.

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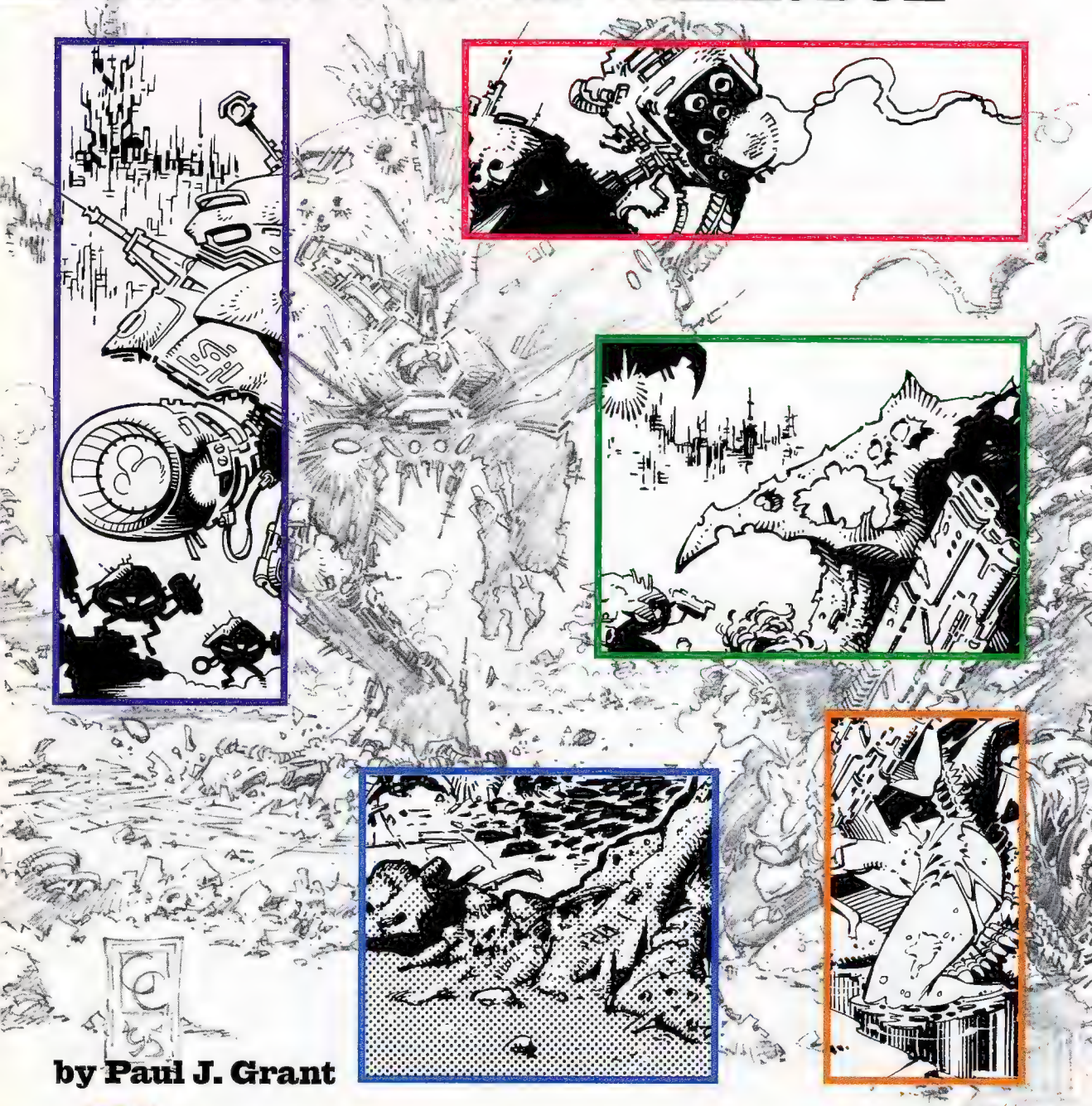

by Paul J. Grant

We sent this Greg Capullo panel to six prominent inkers—
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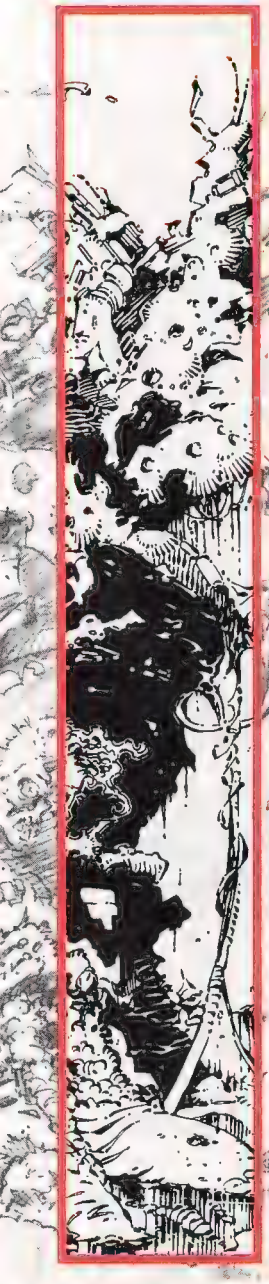
RAY McCARTHY
DANNY MIKI
JIMMY PALMIOTTI
SCOTT WILLIAMS
—to see them work their magic. Each inker's work can be identified by the above color codes.



Klaus Janson has a bone to pick with *Wizard*.

"In the Chuck Dixon article [*Wizard* #44], the Punisher illustration was credited to John Romita Jr. That's not true.

"It was drawn by John Romita Jr. and [inked by] Klaus Janson," continues the successful inker. "I'd love to not credit *writers* for a year, and see what happens. We're so used to diminishing the contributions of the other artists on the book that people don't even blink when you see a credit that doesn't include the other half of the art team."

"All you have to do is go to a convention, and it's obvious that the pencilers get more fan attention," *WildC.A.T.s* inker Scott Williams observes. "I don't have a problem with that. Inkers are kidding themselves if they don't think that a penciler's job is more difficult, but it's not the pencil lines which eventually show up. Sometimes I compare it to a rock band. The penciler is like the lead singer or guitarist. They're the one up front who the women are throwing their panties to. But you know what? They've got to have their rhythm section, and that's what inkers' roles are."

It's no wonder that the inker is usually the forgotten member of the art team. Pencilers generally get more money for their work, and they gain more prestige, at least from the public. This attitude, according to veteran Dick Giordano, stems largely from ignorance. "They really don't know what the inker does. They think it's a non-critical job because they're not familiar with the process. People in the industry, however, recognize the value of the inker."

In the most basic terms, the inker's job is to prepare the artwork for reproduction. Janson, who teaches at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, puts it in historical perspective. "The only technical reason why inkers exist is because penciling did not reproduce a hundred years ago. Inking started out to prepare drawings for newspaper reproduction."

Nexus and *WildC.A.T.s* inker Gary Martin—who is currently working on a book called *The Art of Inking Comic Books*—agrees. "The American comic book form that we know has been defined more by a black ink line than by a graphite pencil line."

On a technical level, the inker's job is to take brush or crowquill pen in hand and draw over the penciled artwork, which is ultimately erased. That is an irony many comic readers don't seem to appreciate. The higher-paid, higher-profile penciler's artwork is necessarily destroyed in the process.

"I have enough ego to remind myself that every line I put down on the page gets printed, and the penciler certainly can't say that," laughs inker Terry Austin, whose work came into prominence on the Chris Claremont-John Byrne issues of *Uncanny X-Men*. "But one time on DC's *Who's Who* [vol. 1 #6], I was sent a Jack Kirby piece to ink [the Demon], and I couldn't bring myself to erase the pencils."

"There are times when it's a pretty daunting job," Scott Williams concurs. "You're given this beautiful piece—smeared and smudged and grayed and multi-valued—and you're supposed to turn it into simple black and white."

It's rarely that simple. Inkers also enhance and clarify the visual aspect of comics. Ray McCarthy, who has worked with penciler Barry Kitson on *The Adventures of Superman* and *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*, notes, "Inkers are like the punctuation on a sentence. The sentence can stand by itself, but the punctuation puts emphasis on the thought and clarifies the concept."

There are, of course, as many ways of accomplishing that goal as there are inkers. By varying line weight, "spotting blacks" (adding shadows), and using special effects like splatter, inkers give the finished artwork depth, focus and texture.

A common misconception—not only among readers, but also held by some editors—according to Janson, is that inking is a non-creative process, i.e., all an inker does is trace. "I say to anybody who thinks that, 'Go ahead and try it.'"

The two basic approaches to the job can be loosely grouped under the headings "Inking" and "Embellishing."

"An inker tries to keep what's there in the pencils as faithful as possible," *WildStar* writer-inker Al Gordon explains. "An embellisher is imposing his style over some-

Many fans are in the dark about just what inkers do.

PHOTO: Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Thanks!

body else's pencil style."

While all inkers embellish to a certain extent, there are certain practitioners whose styles are so distinctive that they are considered primarily embellishers. Janson falls into that category, as do Bill Sienkiewicz (*Spectacular Spider-Man*), Kevin Nowlan (*Superman vs. Aliens*) and Tom Palmer (*The Avengers*).

Austin, on the other hand, sees his job as taking "what's good in the pencils and improving it, and [trying] to be as invisible as I can be."

A good inker has to be flexible and adapt to the needs of the project. Joe Rubinstein, who began as Dick Giordano's inking assistant when he was 13 years old—and has worked with, by his own estimation, close to 400 different pencilers in his career—has lived by that standard for many years. "I can pretty much ink in any style I have to, to accommodate people I work with. I call up pencilers and ask them what it is they'd like me to do on this job, and then I try and give it to them, [as long as] it doesn't go against my concept of what the work should look like."

While there are many individuals who write, pencil, ink and even letter and color their books, in general, comic production is a collaborative process, largely due to a matter of economics and scheduling. This means that rarely do pencilers ink their own work, which many inkers, surprisingly enough, find unfortunate.

"Nine times out of 10, the penciler is his own best inker," Dick Giordano maintains. "Often, it's impossible for one person to do complete artwork in a 30 day period."

Jimmy Palmiotti, one of the most in-demand inkers of the last few years, agrees in principle. "I worked with Doug Mahnke on [Dark Horse Comics'] *X*, and he's an amazing penciler. I inked him and I had a ball and he loved the stuff, but I look at when Doug inks himself and it's so much better than what I do. Same thing with Mike Golden and Mike Mignola."

On the other hand, splitting art chores between two people can produce a final result that is superior to what either partner could accomplish separately. Again, Palmiotti, speaking of his penciling partner on Event Comics' *Ash* and Valiant's *Ninjak*, observes that "Joe Quesada, inking himself, is not that good. He doesn't understand the tools, and he'll be the first one to tell you that."

"An inker can give another pair of eyes to the work," Gary Martin adds. "The medium favors specialization. Most of the inkers working today have a knack for inking, where some pencilers don't." Extreme Studios inker Danny Miki (*Badrock*) also finds that "a lot of pencilers can't control a pen nib as well as they can control their pencils."

Rubinstein puts it all in perspective. "[Musicians] Simon and Garfunkel are fine on their own, but together I think they had a magic that they don't have separately. When you get someone like John Buscema [penciling] *Conan the Barbarian*, while he certainly can ink beautifully, when Tony DeZuñiga [inked] it in the mid-'70s, I thought that stuff had a magic to it that had never been achieved before."

Certain combinations definitely have their own special magic. Murphy Anderson's inks over Curt Swan's pencils on various Superman titles during the '60s were so distinctive that people used to refer to the team as Swanderson.

Many believe that, while Jack Kirby was unquestionably the King, he never looked quite as regal as when he was inked by Joe Sinnott.

While the right pairing of penciler and inker can be crucial, all too often that pairing is left to chance. "I think it's crucial to bring the inker into the creative process from the very beginning, because his contribution defines the overall look of the work," Martin insists. "Usually, however, the editor won't think of an inker until after the pencils have already been started."

Most inkers will concede that the penciler is the senior partner of the artistic team. Gordon puts it in cinematic terms: "We are definitely secondary to the penciler. The penciler is telling the story, so he's the director. He decides what everybody wears, so he's the costume designer. He's deciding what the people look like, so he's the casting director. He's also lighting everything, so he's the cinematographer."

Does this mean that the inker has no role in the storytelling process? Most assuredly not, says Martin.

"You need to direct the reader's eyes to where he should be looking." Foreground-background separation by the inker makes the art-

HUNT OR BE HUNTED.

TUROK. IN JULY.

0: THE ORIGIN OF THE DINOSAUR HUNTER.
BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN & RAGS MORALES.

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work easier for the reader to interpret, explains Martin. The inker also provides clarity, mood and atmosphere.

Most inkers vary their inking technique to accommodate different pencilers' styles. In Giordano's experience, "It might not always be apparent, but often you choose a particular technique based on the penciler's strengths and weaknesses. If the penciler does a lot of small-figure work, I'll be more inclined to use a pen to get a cleaner line. If the penciler's work is organic and looks like real stuff, like Neal Adams', I'm more likely to use a brush to retain the look of the material."

The inker's reaction is largely based on how "tight" the pencils are, i.e., how much detail they contain. Some pencilers are extremely detailed, while others only provide sketchy panel breakdowns or layouts. Jerry Ordway, who inked both *Crisis on Infinite Earths* (over George Pérez) and *Zero Hour* (over Dan Jurgens), has seen both ends of that spectrum. "If the penciler is doing very tight pencils, you just try to bring out the pencils and make sure that it reads well in black and white. On *Zero Hour*, I was working from Dan Jurgens' breakdowns, where there was no lighting and it was pretty much figure placement and storytelling—everything else was up to me."

Joe Rubinstein also worked with Jurgens, most recently on *Superman*. "Some people call you up and say they don't like any variety in the [line] contour, they want a very understated line. On the other hand, Dan Jurgens emphasizes that he wants as much variation [in line thickness] as possible. Then I kick in my Inking 101 approach, and go to a more traditional thick-and-thin line."

But can good inking save bad pencils? This is open to debate.

Jimmy Palmiotti says yes. "You put Klaus Janson on anyone, and when you get the job back it looks beautiful." Generally, however, the consensus is that, as Scott Williams puts it, "The page is only as good as its weakest link. If you're a good inker you can sometimes gloss over some of the drawing faults, but if it's bad storytelling, there's nothing you can do about that."

All inkers agree, however, that bad inks can easily ruin the best pencils in the world.

"Inkers are no less artists than pencilers," Klaus Janson states vehemently. "The goals of inking are the exact same goals that pencilers have. We all have to deal with perspective and volume and how to communicate weight and three-dimensionality on a two dimensional piece of paper. All of the challenges are exactly the same. Art is art. There is no difference." ☆

Paul J. Grant, who wrote Wizard *#46's Neal Adams interview, couldn't ink a panel if his life depended on it.*

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Many readers hope to someday work in comics professionally, and some undoubtedly would like to be inkers. We asked a few inkers what tips they would give to would-be inkers, and which pitfalls they should try to avoid.

SCOTT WILLIAMS: "Learn how to draw, because there's so much interpretation that goes on. You've got to know how to draw a knee or a tree."

JIMMY PALMIOTTI: "I think inking is all about shading. It's about light sources and giving weight to a figure."

KLAUS JANSON: "You need to think about light. I never ink a panel without thinking about where the light source is."

JERRY ORDWAY: "Never be afraid to look at somebody else's work. If someone did it right before you, you might as well learn from it."

TERRY AUSTIN: "Don't get trapped in the current vogue because when that's no longer popular, what are you going to do?"

DANNY MIKI: "Observe everything. Look at shadows, look at raindrops when it's raining on your windshield, look at trees in the distance, and decide how you'd ink that."

DENNIS CRAMER (*The Invisibles*): "Know when to stop. Each line has to make sense."

BARBARA KAALBERG (*Primal Force, The Strangers*): "Practice, practice, practice! Learn to use your tools to the best of your abilities. Never miss a deadline and never break a contract."

ROBERT JONES (*The Ray, StormWatch*): "A lot of beginners don't vary their line very much. They should get as much variation out of the line as they can, to bring as much life to the drawing as possible."

KARL KESEL (*Legends, World's Finest*): "The very first rule of inking is the same as the very first rule of medicine: Do No Harm. Make sure that what you hand in is no worse than what you were handed to begin with."

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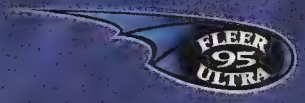


Greg Capullo's

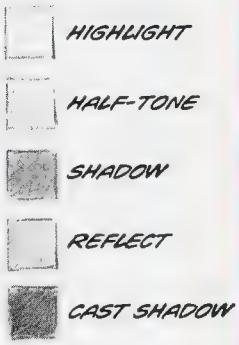
KRASH COURSE

THE DARK SIDE!

Now *there's* a tough title to frighten your parents with! Not to worry, though. You can assure your folks that we won't be sacrificing any goats or reciting any unholy incantations...this month. Instead, this month's Krash Course will be dealing with the use of light and shadow and how they both can be used to give solidity and dimension to your drawings!

OK, class, repeat after me: "Shadow defines form." But Greggy, what does it mean? Well, picture, if you can, what things would look like if everything you saw was completely bathed in light from every possible angle all at once.

If you can't picture it, you're doing great! Because you wouldn't be able to see anything. The reason you're *able* to see objects as being solid and three dimensional is because of the relationship between light and the absence of light. Ta da! "Shadow defines form." With that having been said...let's rock!



1. shadows are good

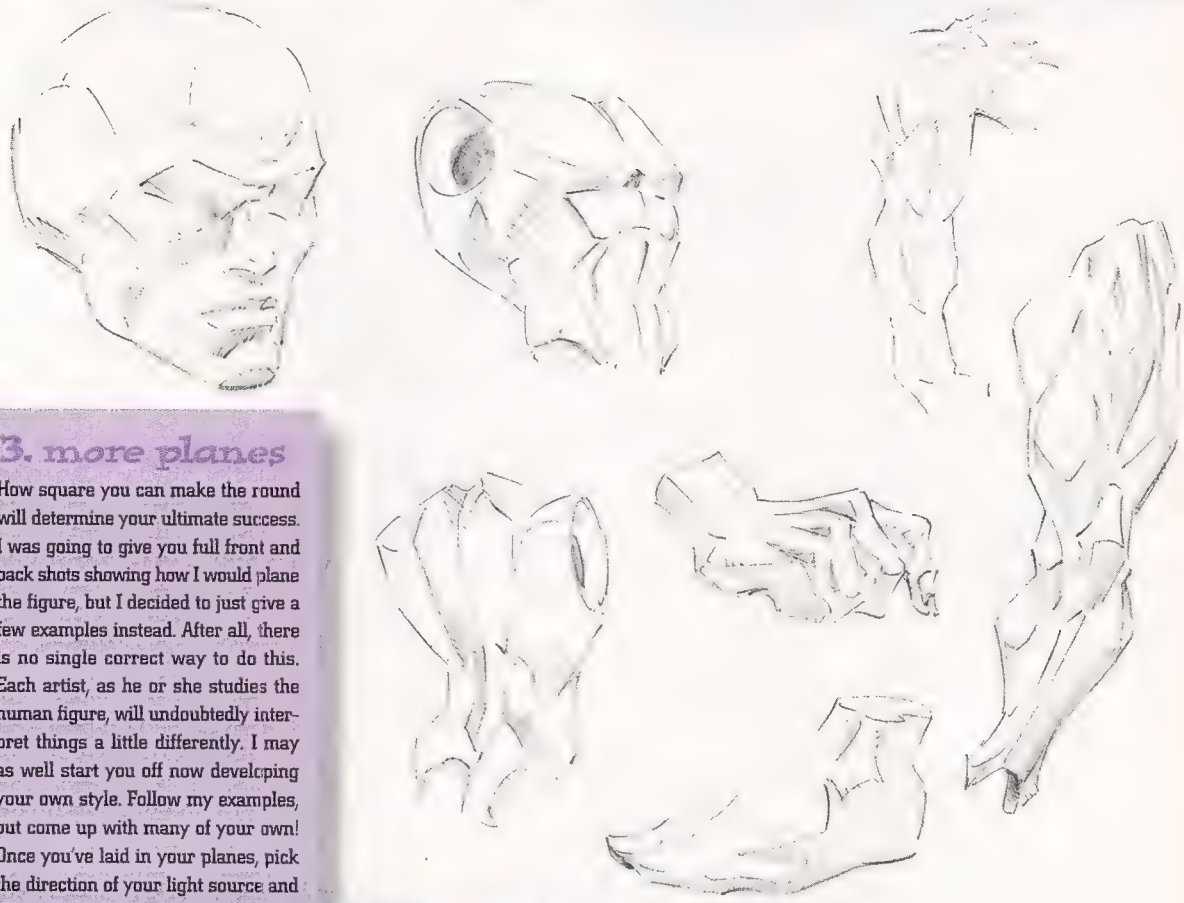
There are five effects that light is able to produce when meeting an object. They are "highlight," "half-tone," "shadow," "reflect" and "cast shadow." The highlight is the area receiving the most light from the light source, therefore making it the brightest area. As we move away from the light source we have the half-tone which is the transitional effect between light and shadow. This area would be darker than the highlight but not as dark as the shadow effect. Shadow now blends into light's next effect known as reflected light. Reflected areas would be lighter than shadowed areas, yet darker than half-tone areas. If you were thinking the shadow area is the darkest, you were wrong. Light's interplay with objects can have one more effect that's darker still...the cast shadow.

KRASH COURSE and all related text, artwork and characters ™ & © Greg Capullo.

2. de planes, de planes!

To teach you how to apply this information to your drawings, I must first warn you of one of the biggest mistakes young comic studs (or students) make. That mistake is forgetting that the objects they're drawing are three-dimensional forms. Because they are drawing on a flat piece of paper, artists tend to treat their subjects as if they were flat, too. Remember that the forms you draw are solid objects and treat them as such! I can hear you saying, "But...but, Greggy...how...?" Don't freak yet. First let me explain exactly how light is able to produce its magical effects.

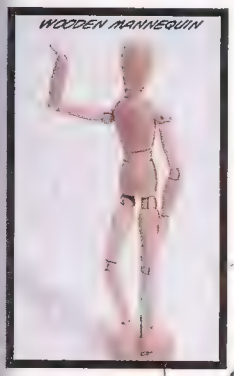
All objects are composed of planes. Planes are flat areas, either actually existing or imposed upon rounded forms. A plane at right angles to the light source would receive the highlight. The next set of planes form the half-tone. And lastly, the shadow planes, because of their angle, can't receive direct light from the source. However, some of those planes, called reflective planes, may receive subdued light from the surrounding lighted areas. "OK. But..." Relax, people. I'm sure you tough guys out there have already been breaking down the figure (or objects) into block shapes. So the next step of adding planes will only be slightly more difficult.

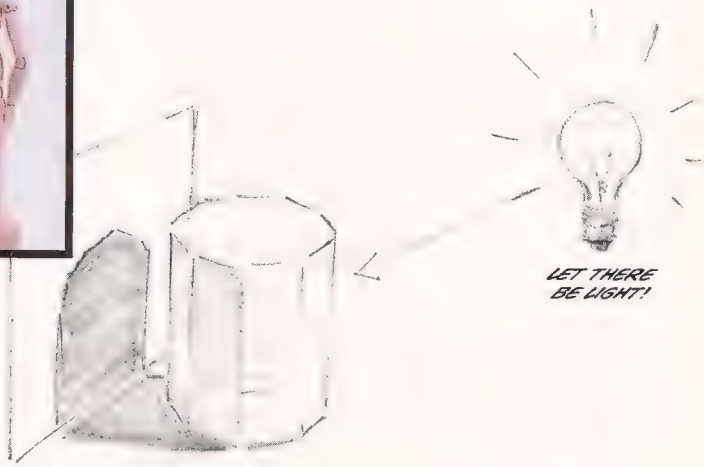


3. more planes

How square you can make the round will determine your ultimate success. I was going to give you full front and back shots showing how I would plane the figure, but I decided to just give a few examples instead. After all, there is no single correct way to do this. Each artist, as he or she studies the human figure, will undoubtedly interpret things a little differently. I may as well start you off now developing your own style. Follow my examples, but come up with many of your own! Once you've laid in your planes, pick the direction of your light source and it's off to the races! Using the principles I've given you, try to figure out which planes fall into which categories and shade them appropriately. For the tough guys out there who really want to get this, I'm gonna give you a couple of tips to assure you a place at the front of the pack.

Number one. Get a wooden mannequin for the artist and, using a lamp to set up various light sources, start sketching. You won't be able to get the intricacies of light and shadow, but you'll certainly become an expert on where to place the shadowy masses! Number two. To fine-tune the planes, use muscle and fitness magazines. Use only photos with a single dominant light source. Otherwise, you'll receive some confusing information.





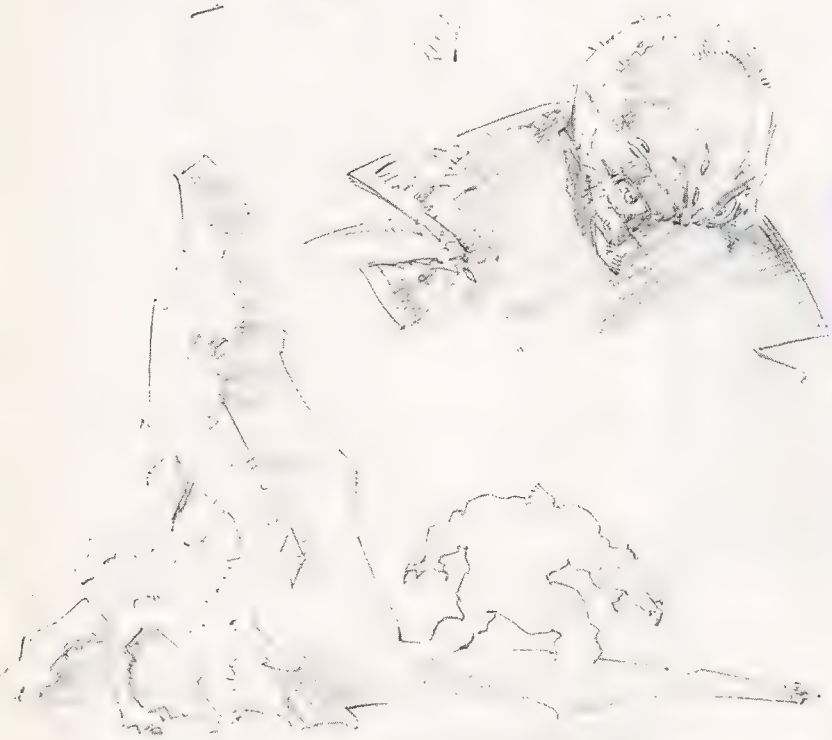
Mannequin photo by Benny Fountain

4. practical use of shadow

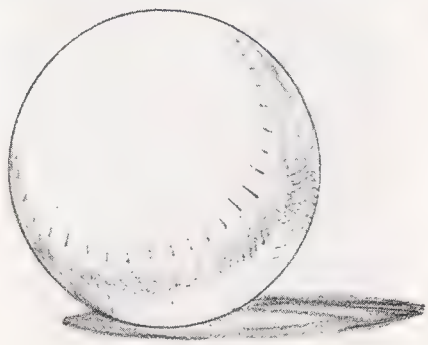
One quick note I'd like to make concerns rendering. A lot of guys show me pencil drawings with all these "rubbed" shading techniques (which is blending one tone to another, using your finger or the side of the pencil). Don't do that! Don't get me wrong, these techniques look great, but they're impractical for comic book artwork. Unless your drawing is going to be reproduced in that blended pencil technique, you're A) wasting your time or B) leaving way too much open for interpretation by the inker (i.e., the person who goes over your pencils in ink).

DON'T DO

Instead, you must think more graphically, using techniques like hatching and so on. A good axiom would be: Don't pencil what you can't ink. Compare the rendering of the ball below compared to the one on the first page. Get the idea? Cool.



ONLY THE SHADOW KNOWS...



Once you've mastered the art of adding shadow to forms, you'll be able to use it in many different ways. All of which will give your comic an exciting and professional look! Here's a generic comic-type pinup for you to study. See if you can identify the five effects of light!

Till next month...keep the lead burnin', tough guys!

Greg Capullo is an artist on Image Comics' Spawn, *as well as going solo on Image's* Angela *mini-series.*

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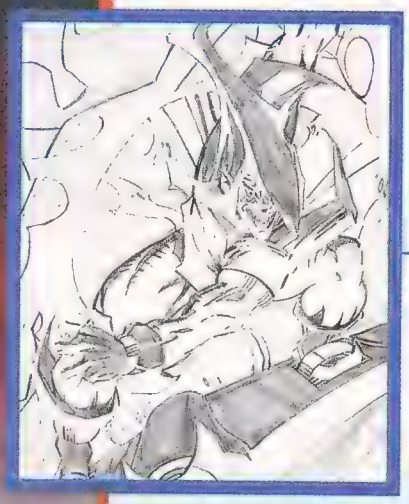
the Drawing board

The 10 cool people whose artwork got an Honorable Mention this month will each receive a *Wolverine* #85 signed by Adam Kubert and a copy of *Gambit and the Externals* #1 signed by Fabian Nicieza. The four hard-working Runners-Up will each receive *The Maxx* #9 signed by Sam Kieth, a *Team Youngblood* #10 signed by Danny Miki and *The Amazing X-Men* #1 signed by Andy Kubert. This month's Grand Prize Winner gets all that neat stuff, *plus* an original piece of art by Scott McDaniel, featuring the brand-spankin' new Green Goblin (thanks a zillion, Scott)! Congrats to everybody!

The showcase of comic book fan art.



Robin™ & © DC Comics, Marvin the Martian™ & © Warner Bros, Green Goblin™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group.

GRAND PRIZE

MARVIN...THE BOY WONDER
By Martin López
Col. Obrera, Mexico, D.F.

RUNNER-UP

DOPPLEGANGER
By Claudio "Goblin" Lenarduzzi
Firence, Italy

Doppleganger™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Rocketeer™ & © Dave Stevens

RUNNER-UP

ROCKETEER
By Micheal Ray
Milwaukee, WI

RUNNER-UP

STAR BLAZERS
By Frank Alexis Jr.
Brooklyn, NY

Star Blazers ™ & © Yoshinobu Nishizaki & Voyager Entertainment, Inc.

Wonder Woman™ & © DC Comics

RUNNER-UP

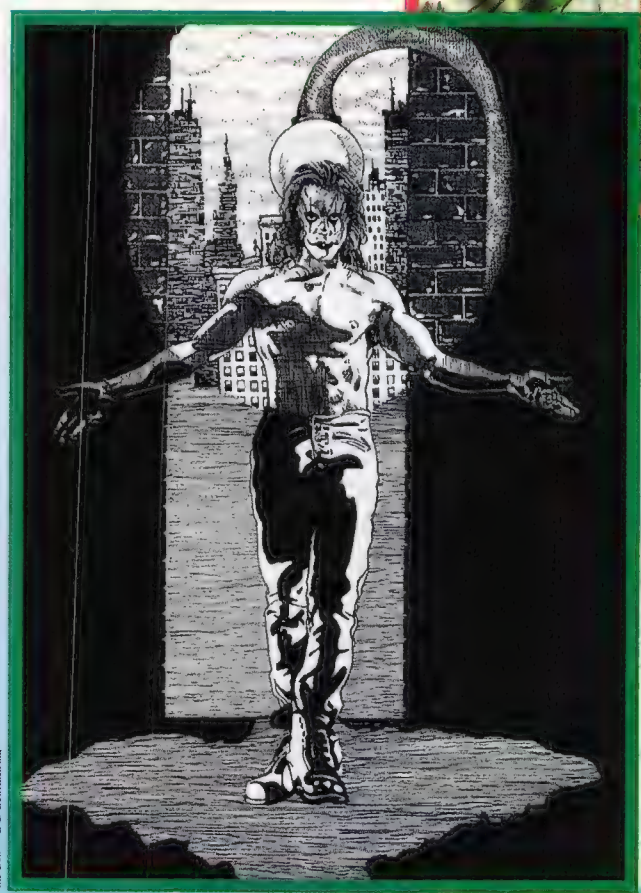
WONDER WOMAN
By Tony Zallocco
Studio City, CA

CYCLOPS vs. THE HULK
By Rob Hassan
Des Plaines, IL

Cyclops & Hulk ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

ANGELA
By Elf
Charlotte, NC

Angela ™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc.



The Crow ™ & © Crowvision Inc.

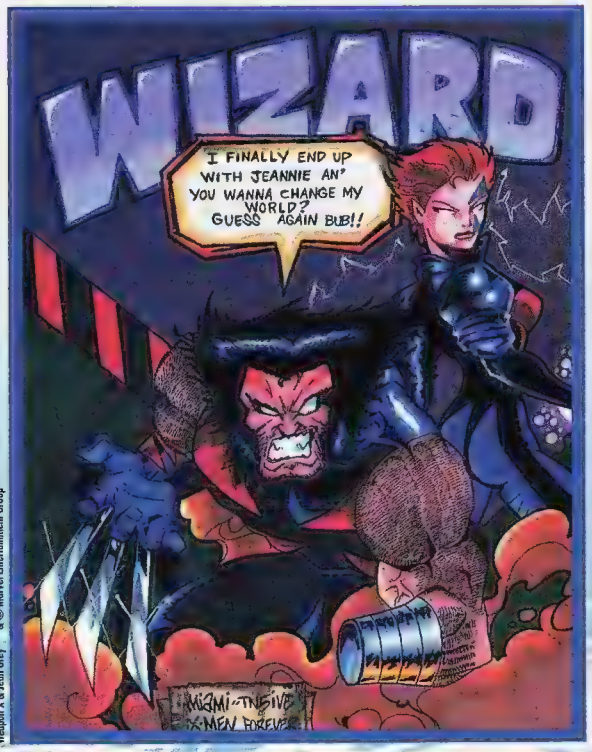
THE CROW
By Scott McFarland
Tyngsboro, MA

Spider-Man™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

SPIDER-MAN
By Darrell Grans
Concord, CA

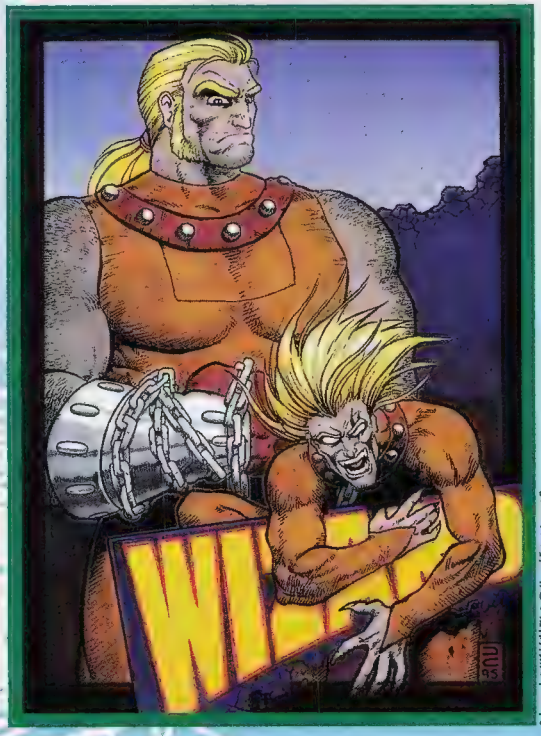
GRIFTER
By Kevin Marks
Vernon Hills, IL

Grifter™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DMA WildStorm Productions



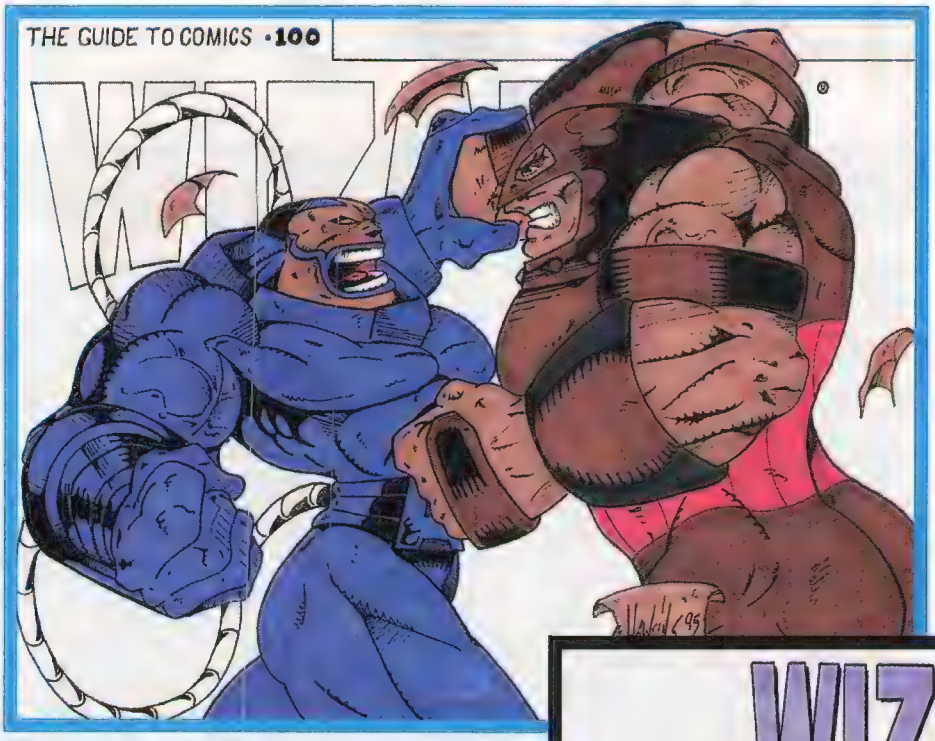
Weapon X & Jean Grey™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

SABRETOOTH & WILDCHILD
By Dave Carleson
Moscow, ID



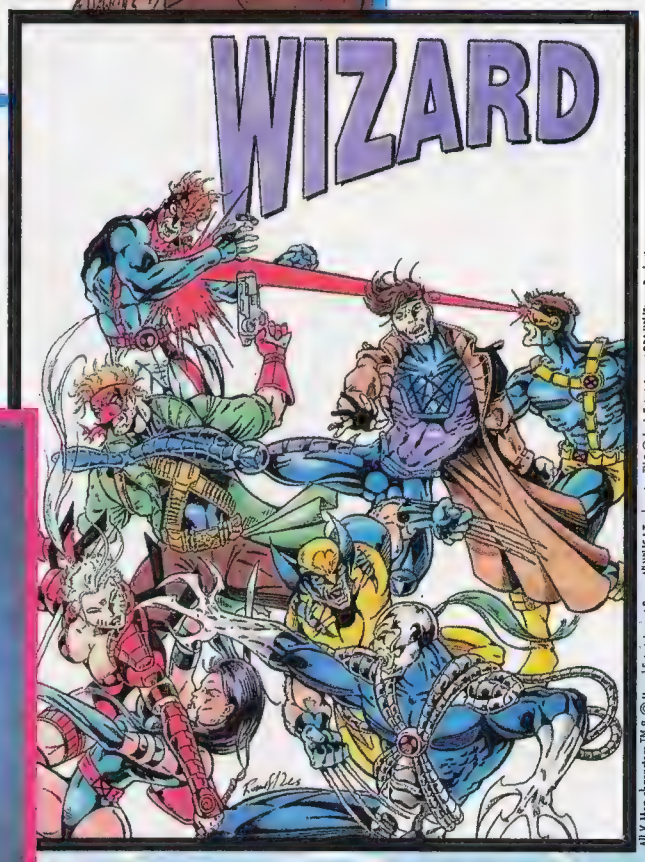
Sabretooth & Wildchild™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

WEAPON X & JEAN GREY
Hey, kids! It seems we've got another artistic genius here who didn't bother to attach his or her full name and address to the back of the art. Guess this talented artist wins...NOTHING! Nice goin', Einstein. Just kiddin'. Write in and tell us who ya are and where ya live, and we'll be sure to give you your goodies.



APOCALYPSE vs. THE JUGGERNAUT
By Eric Scott Hawkins
Cahokia, IL

Apocalypse & Juggernaut ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group



X-MEN vs. WILDC.A.T.S
By Robert Saunders
Port Moody, BC, Canada

All X-Men characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. All WildC.A.T.s characters ™ & © Aegis Entertainment DBA WildStorm Productions.

SUPERMAN
By Zacharias Papantoniou
Athens, Greece

Superman ™ & © DC Comics

Entries for The Drawing Board should be sent to:
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c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

Submissions can be on any form of unlined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils, crayon, line art, etc.). Neon inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11-1/4". Do not fold, bend or roll artwork. Mail flat to avoid damage. Please enclose your name and full address. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Good luck!

CONTEST

Fleer and *Wizard* Present:

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Imagine getting to vote without having to hear boring campaign speeches or watching debaters do the never-ending debate thing. Heck, you don't even have to be 18 to vote in this election. And guess what? Your vote counts! You may even get to win some cool prizes!

DeVRIES

NELSON

SCANLAN

PATELIS

HOW TO PLAY

Just check out these Spider-Man Marvel Masterpieces images from Dave DeVries, Nelson, Peter Scanlan and Dimitri Patelis. Decide which artist you like best and vote for him! It's that easy. We'll tabulate the votes and tell you in a future issue who everyone's fave-rave is. A few lucky voters will even walk away with a few snazzy prizes!

THE PRIZES!

Grand Prize (1): One lucky reader who votes for the winning artist will receive the original artwork from that artist! And because we're so nice, we throw in an uncut sheet and a box of Marvel Masterpieces 1995 cards.

Second Prize (5): Five readers will receive an uncut sheet and a box of Marvel Masterpieces 1995 cards.

Third Prize (10): 10 readers will receive a box of Marvel Masterpieces 1995 cards.

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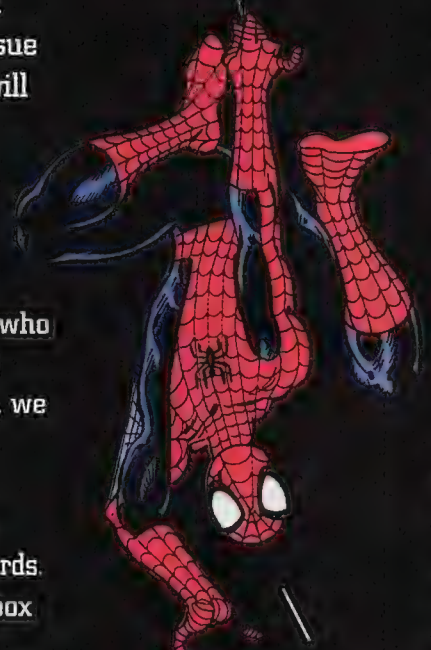

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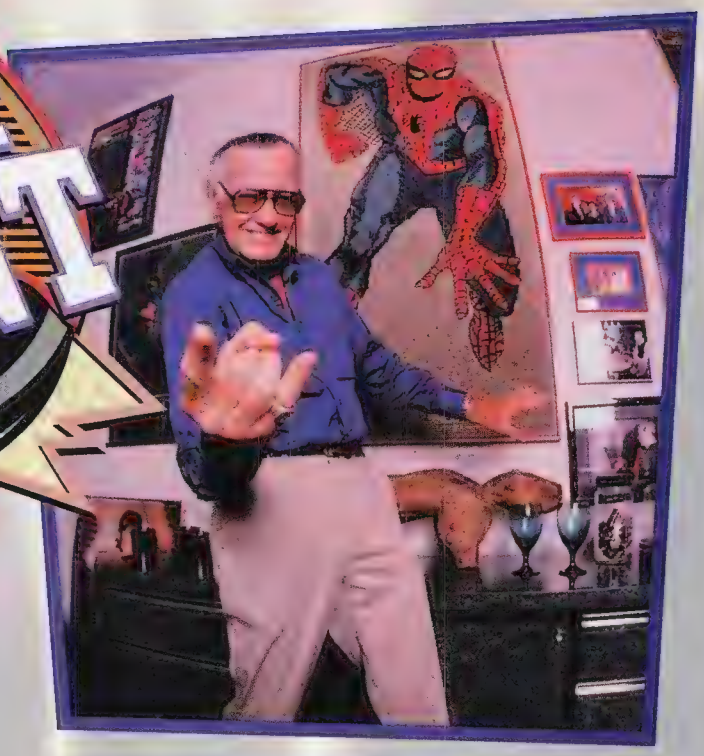


Stan Lee says, "If they need to cast Spider-Man, I've got his web-slinging action down to an art form!"

The comic insider's guide to Hollywood.

SPidey MoVie: Will it be Made?

Stan Lee has seen Jim Cameron's 50-page detailed treatment for the long-in-development Spider-Man movie, and he'd love to tell you what he's read.

"But I can't," said the frustrated Man from Marvel. "I desperately love Jim's story so much that I would love to tell it to anybody who would listen. But Jim wants this thing to be a total surprise until you see it on the screen."

Which, reported Lee, could be a while. "Unfortunately, there are a few legal problems, but nothing that has to do with Marvel, that have to be resolved before the movie can be made."

The skirmish that will likely decide the live-action movie's fate is being waged between Carolco, the production company trying to make *Spider-Man* a reality, and 21st Century Film Corp., the folks that brought us 1990's abortive Captain America feature. Although 21st Century sold the Spider-Man rights it once held to Carolco when Cameron came into the picture—the director and Carolco had at that point teamed up on *T2*—the current dispute questions the validity of the deal. And with free-spending Carolco teetering on the brink of bankruptcy and 21st Century already there, both sides have dug in their heels, making a speedy resolution which is about as feasible as a guy who can crawl up walls.

But Lee, who currently has his hands full supervising the highly successful Spider-Man animated television series, is focusing on the positive, raving that what he's seen of Cameron's notion for big-screen Spidey has him walking on air. "I think this will be the greatest adaptation of Spider-Man that has ever been done. Jim's story is so amazing! He has taken a character that everybody has known for 30 years and, without making any drastic changes or doing anything that alters the basic premise of Spider-Man, has come up with a story that I think is totally full of surprises. I think it will be bigger than *The Terminator*." Industry buzz has it that the biggest surprise will be Cameron's treatment of the Web-Slinger saga as a puberty allegory; Peter Parker reportedly won't assume the mantle of full-fledged superhero until the story's final scenes, when the once-bitten, perennially shy teen finally comes to grips with the power and responsibility that have been thrust upon him.

Lee has not really thought too much about who should play Spider-Man. But he is sure of one thing. "I think it will probably be an unknown. I don't think the average star would want to play a role where he's wearing a mask for half of the movie. But I do believe the villains and incidental characters will be played by actors we recognize."

—Marc Shapiro and staff reports

Tia Carrere is a Bad Girl

If you thought Tia Carrere was one hot babe as Cassandra in *Wayne's World* and its cleverly titled sequel, *Wayne's World 2*, just imagine the possibilities of her exotic beauty all wrapped up in superhero garb. Not one to wait around for opportunities to materialize, Carrere and her nightclub-owner hubby Elie Samaha have started their own film production company, Phoenician Films. They have big plans for making Tia into a Nineties-style comic

Stan Lee photo: Al Ortega

Tia Carrere (scha-wiing!) wants to become a comic book film heroine with her film production company's help.

book film heroine.

"We're discussing a couple of different possibilities," Carrere coyly admitted, playing her cards somewhat close to the vest. "There are a couple of different comic book characters that we're looking at for projects. The deals aren't set yet, but it's between a couple of different ones, [and both] are very cool, strong, female superheroes. It should be a really cool thing to be involved in, but I can't say exactly what they are right now."

Word is that Tia is leaning toward Bad Girl comics like *Shi* and *Vampirella*. *Barb Wire*, based on the Dark Horse comic, has already been grabbed by *Baywatch* beauty Pamela Anderson, or Pamela Lee as she now wants to be known, so count *that* one out.

—Jenny Peters

Snipes a Go for Black Panther

Wesley Snipes has taken on a real liking to cats lately—very big cats. Actually, he's psyched about turning into a cat of sorts, playing *The Black Panther*, Marvel Comics' classic African superhero in a new film. Initially appearing in *Fantastic Four #52* in the mid-'60s, the Black Panther was the first black comic book hero.

Snipes and his production company have been working on a script for a number of years; now, the muscular actor says it's just about time. "Hopefully, we'll start filming sometime in '95 or early '96," he said confidently. "We've got a great script coming up. He's a great character. It's going to be beautiful! I'm really happy about this concept. We went through a couple of different concepts and they weren't meshing, but this one we've got now is going to be absolutely superb. It's going to be beautiful, it's fantasy, it's got a good moral message. It's going to be good for adults as well as science fiction aficionados and children. It'll be a great family film all around."

One key for Snipes was the incorporation of his personal passion for martial arts into the legend of the Black Panther. "We'll use a lot of capoiera, a lot of stick fighting, incorporating the fighting arts of all the Eastern and African traditions," he explained.

But, truth be told, the real appeal of becoming the Black Panther is much more basic for Wesley. "I'll wear a cowl, like in the comic, in a nice indigo blue. A rich indigo blue. Yes."

—Jenny Peters

Tia Carrera and Wesley Snipes photos courtesy of Everett Collection.

Go, Speed Racer, Go!

Japanese animation is hot, hot, hot these days, with MTV leading the loving embrace of that unique, wide-eyed genre by showing manga scenes amidst its regular programming. Mix in the proven success of Baby Boomer nostalgia films like *The Addams Family* and *The Brady Bunch Movie*, and it's no surprise that Hollywood producers Richard Donner and Lauren Shuler-Donner are planning a live-action movie version of the 1960s' most popular Japanese import, *Speed Racer*.

Apparently ready to go into production this September, the *Speed Racer* project has been knocking around Hollywood for years, going through numerous script revisions before finally reaching a mainstream story that the producers approved.

Johnny Depp is reportedly the main candidate for the lead role, according to published reports and his actor pal Nicolas Cage. "Hopefully I'll do the *Speed Racer* movie next, with Johnny Depp, playing Racer X," Cage confided recently. "We'll see what happens with that. It's still in negotiations, but I think it would be a great project."

The enigmatic Speed Racer's characteristics seem to be a perfect fit for Depp's quirky acting choices. The guy who's played Edward Scissorhands, Ed Wood, and Don Juan admits that he looks for something different in his roles. "I'm somehow drawn to characters that are perceived in a certain way, because of the way they look, or the way they dress, or whatever. I guess I'm drawn to characters that are judged on the surface level," Depp said. Speed Racer is definitely one odd-looking dude, but if anyone can make it work, there's no doubt Depp can. Only one question: How's he gonna get those blank eyes workin'?

—Jenny Peters

'BIG' movie plans for Tekno Books

A Quentin Tarantino-created comic book and a Mickey Spillane movie script may be two of the bonuses of the recent alliance between Miramax Films and BIG Entertainment—an alliance that will flex the film development muscle of the Miramax subcompany Dimension Films to adapt many books from BIG Entertainment's Tekno•Comix line into films.

According to BIG Entertainment spokesperson Denise Treco, "The deal with Miramax calls for the *Mike Danger*, *Mr. Hero* and *Lost Universe* comic book titles to go into active development as live-action, feature film projects. At this point, there is no start date on any of those projects and no filmmakers attached to them, although Mickey Spillane has expressed a strong desire to write the screenplay for Mike Danger."

A second element of the Miramax-BIG deal calls for a joint Miramax-Tekno comic

Wesley Snipes has a thing for a guy named Black Panther...

book imprint to be created; the ultimate goal would be to develop comic books created by filmmakers that would eventually be developed into film properties. The tentative launch date for the comics line is January 1996, with a projected three to four ongoing titles during the year.

Treco was somewhat evasive when it was speculated that one of the new comics might be created by Oscar-winning *Pulp Fiction* director Tarantino. "You didn't hear that from me, but it is a strong possibility."

Treco further reports that two other Tekno titles, *Neil Gaiman's Lady Justice* and *Leonard Nimoy's Primortals*, have not yet been optioned to film. And no, the Miramax-BIG deal will not include any involvement in the projected *Crow* sequel.

—Marc Shapiro

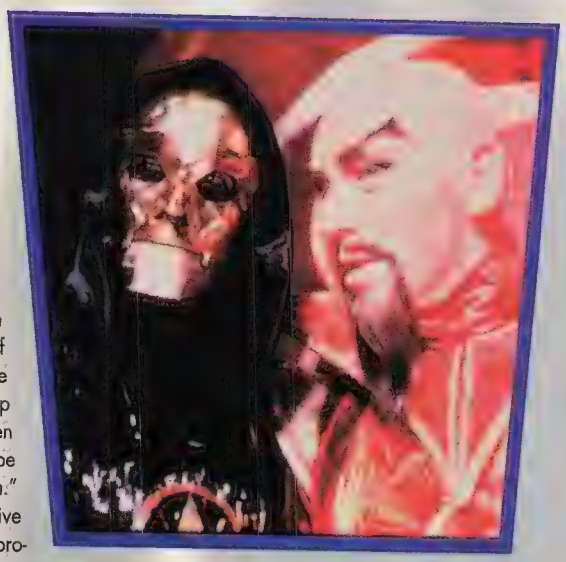
'Flash Gordon Approaching'?

Well, Freddie Mercury always did tell us Flash Gordon was "king of the impossible": Just one month after it was reported in this space that plans for screenwriter David Goyer (the upcoming *Ghost Rider*) to pen a big-budget Flash Gordon movie had fallen through, out of Hollywood comes word that *Die Hard*'s Steven de Souza has nabbed the assignment. For de Souza, the comics-to-film terrain is decidedly less alien than the planet Mongo—his credits over the past two years include *The Flintstones* and *Judge Dredd*.

"I'm looking to the Alex Raymond [comic] strip from the 1930s for inspiration," de Souza said of his latest superheroic undertaking. "That strip preceded the invention of the comic book by a couple of years, and clearly had a tremendous influence on the ways comic books are drawn. And the bottom line is, even though *Flash Gordon* is one of the seminal works of American pop art—maybe the most important comic strip ever—I don't think it's ever been done right on the screen. I hope this will be the definitive *Flash*."

As for casting the definitive Flash himself, de Souza and producer Peter Guber (*Batman*) are still in the brainstorming stage. "Johnny Depp was mentioned as a possibility," the writer said. "And Peter has talked about getting someone like Robin Williams to play Dr. Zarkov, to bring the intensity he showed as the defrocked psychiatrist in *Dead Again* to this obsessed scientist role. But it's very early. By the time this is ready to go, who knows?"

—Tom Russo



"Hey, what're those cops lookin' at? We're not doing anything!" A possible scene from the new *Flash Gordon*?

Oscar-winning writer/director Quentin Tarantino may be bringing his "pulp fiction" to comics soon.

Stan Lee... A Mallrat

Writer-director Kevin Smith, who made his name with his debut *Clerks*, turned fanboy for his soon-to-be-released second film, *Mallrats*.

"When I was writing the script," said Smith, "[one] character was always just going to be this nebulous comic book creator guy. Then our producer said, 'Well, I know Stan Lee.' And I was like, 'No way.' And he said, 'Yeah, write it in. I'll ask Stan if he wants to do it.' So now Stan Lee counsels one of the movie's heroes on his love life."

Lee recently spent a day on the *Mallrats* set in, appropriately enough, Minneapolis's gigantic Mall of America, shooting what Lee himself describes as a "pivotal" cameo.

"This will be my audition movie, of course," deadpanned Lee, whose previous show biz experience—through a government-sponsored theater program back in the '30s and '40s—convinced him that he'd make a better comic book writer than an actor. "I'll be sending *Mallrats* around to all the studios. But I keep telling them, 'Don't be throwing the kind of roles at me that you'd normally give to Tom Cruise. I want things that are a little meatier.'"

As for exactly what kind of material Smith's got him biting into, Lee isn't getting into further specifics. "Oh, I don't think I should tell," he said with a laugh. "The mystery should be to go to the movie and see what the hell Stan Lee has to do with this whole thing." 'Nuff said.

—Tom Russo

Outtakes

French actor Vincent Perez has edged out singer Jon Bon Jovi for the lead in *The Crow* sequel, according to published reports. Perez will replace Brandon Lee, who was accidentally shot and killed on the set of the 1994 original....Hey, did anyone catch Shannon Wheeler's character Too Much Coffee Man in a recent Converse sneaker commercial? It is unknown as to whether or not the character will appear in more spots....Congrats to the animated TV program winners of this year's Daytime Emmy Awards (held in New York City on May 19th), including: *Where on Earth is Carmen Sandiego?*, which garnered Outstanding Animated Children's Program and Outstanding Art Direction; *Rugrats*, which won the Outstanding Achievement in Animation award; and Disney's *Aladdin* show, which brought home the Music Direction and Film Sound Editing trophies. ☆

Quentin Tarantino and FLASH GORDON photos courtesy of Everett Collection

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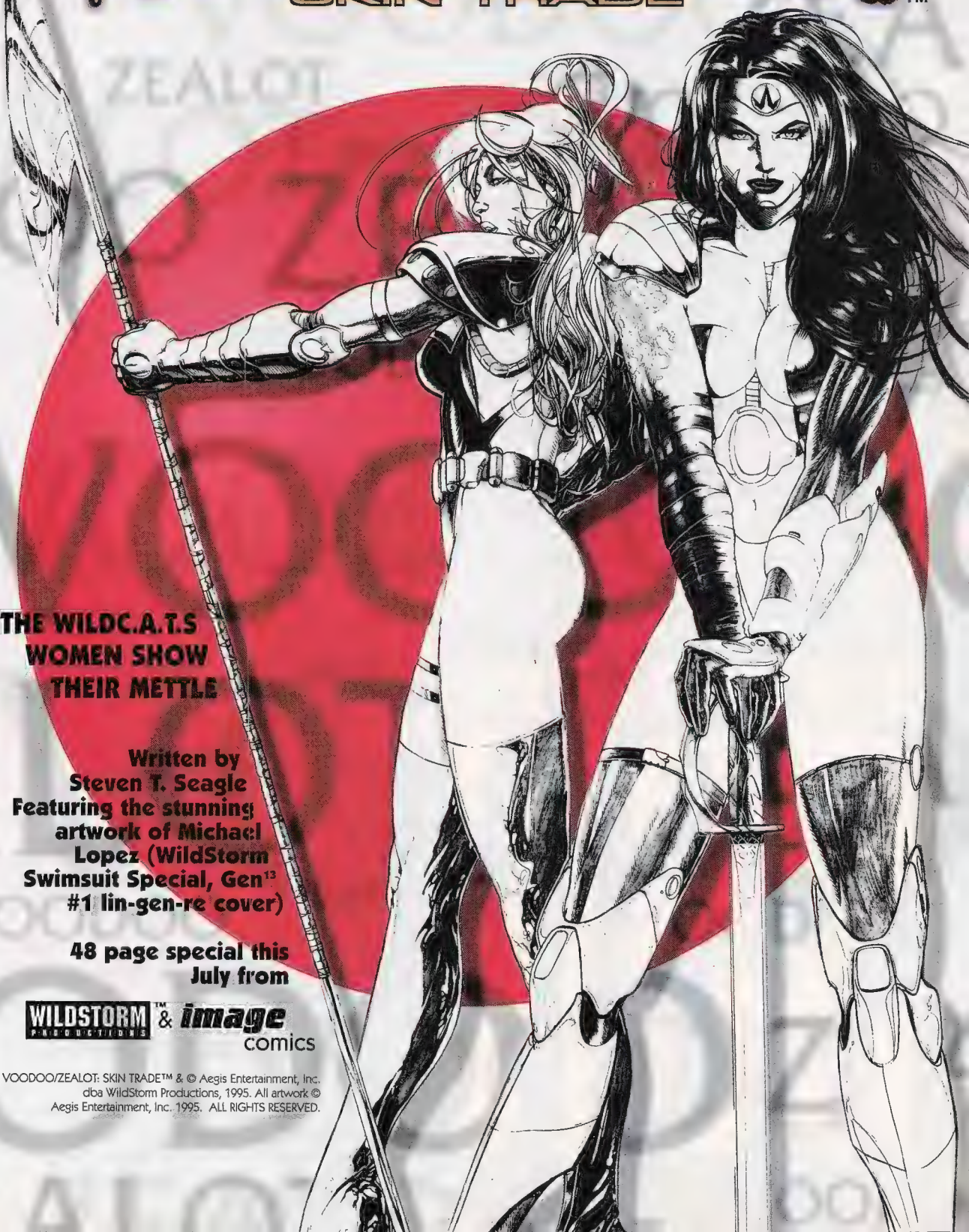

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Superartist John Romita Jr. chats about his career's turning points, why Marvel is key, and why he's not returning to the X-Men by Paul J. Grant

FAVORITE SON

Since his professional debut in 1976, John Romita Jr. has endured as one of Marvel's most steady, reliable and popular artists for almost 20 years, having enjoyed acclaimed runs on several titles, from *Iron Man* to *Amazing Spider-Man* to *Uncanny X-Men* to *Punisher War Zone*, along with his well-received 1993-94 *Daredevil: Man without Fear* mini-series and recent return to the Spider-verse.

Romita Jr. literally grew up with Marvel. His parents, John Sr. and Virginia, have worked there since the days Stan Lee lurked in its famed Bullpen, and are still there, currently acting as Marvel's art director and traffic manager, respectively.

It's almost funny how, despite his own success, Romita Jr. still lurks in the shadow of his famous father, who is arguably considered the definitive Spider-Man artist. But being in that shadow is something the younger Romita recognizes and reacts to rather interestingly. Now a superstar in his own right, he examines how his story began and where it is going...

Top: The final spread from *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*
Inset: The "true" Peter Parker from *Spider-Man: The Lost Years*

All artwork, logotypes and characters ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Photo by Al Ortego

VITAL STATS:

Name: **John Romita Jr.**
Date of Birth: **August 17, 1956 in New York City.**
Occupation: **Artist**
Base of Operations: **Florida and California (it accounts for that tan)**
Nickname: **J.R.**
Career Highlights: **Helped redefine *Iron Man* with writer David Michelinie and inker Bob Layton; lengthy stint on *Uncanny X-Men*; followed in his father's footsteps, yet made his own mark, on *Amazing Spider-Man* and *Daredevil*; worked with writer Frank Miller on *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*, winning popular acclaim; worked on the *Punisher/Batman* crossover for Marvel/DC, drawing Batman and the Joker professionally for the first time.**

WIZARD: When I was a kid, I used to go to my dad's office. Did you do the same?

JOHN ROMITA JR.: Once or twice during the summertime, I would just spend the whole day with him. I don't know if he enjoyed it or not, but I got a kick out of it. I met [artists like Jack] Kirby, Herb Trimpe, Marie Severin, John Buscema. I met everyone who, at the time, were my heroes, and they still are. I probably made a pest of myself, but I had a good time.

What was it like growing up in a comic book household?

I didn't think of it as a comic book household for many years. My parents are the perfect parents, and so regardless of whether it was a comic book household or not, it was wonderful. Comics didn't really determine life in our family, although that's what Dad did [for a living]. My father didn't want me to think it was that important, that I had to follow in his footsteps. He never wanted to put any pressure on me in any way. It was a novelty, but it wasn't earth-shattering. It became earth-shattering suddenly when I saw issue #12 of *Daredevil*, and I said, "Holy cow! This is what I want to do for a living!"

Your father was the artist on *Daredevil* #12?

Over Kirby's layouts, yeah. Up until that point, he was doing romance comics for DC, and I didn't pay much attention. I used to tell him, "There's too much kissing going on here!" So when I saw him working on the cover to *Daredevil* #12, my eyes popped out of my head, and I said, "How come he's got underwear on?" I never read any comics before that point. After my dad started bringing comics home, I got into it, and then my imagination started running wild.

Once you decided this was going to be your life's work, how did you go about making it all come true?

I started doodling intently, like on the covers of my books, and I got into a lot of trouble because I was going to a Catholic grammar school. In high school, I got a lot of attention, because I was the only artist of this type in the school, and then I started getting more intense. Being a hippie-type was more "in," because this was during the early '70s, and I was too straight. My art teacher used to call me [Norman] Rockwell, and tell me to loosen up. I was too realistic. I found a college that had a curriculum in illustration. In the meantime, I was following my dad closely, reading my comics over and over, becoming a maniacal fan of Kirby's *Fantastic Four* and John Buscema's stuff. I had my direction. Then I brought samples over to Marvel and got work, and that's been the progression since then.

Did your father encourage or discourage you?

He never encouraged me, because he didn't want me to think that I had to be an artist just because he was an artist. A lot of my friends were doing what their fathers were doing, working in delicatessens or as plumbers. But he did not tell me, "Don't be an artist." It was basically, "Do what you want to do." For years, I never showed my father anything, because I was too ashamed.

When I eventually showed him some artwork from school, he would make comments. If I asked questions, he would answer. It was very easygoing and comfortable. He did it right out of the Daddy's Textbook, so to speak. But when it came to working for Marvel, he actually discouraged me. He said, "Working for Marvel may not be such a good idea. You're an advertising major; why don't you consider that?" And I said, "I don't want to do that. I want to be a cartoonist." And he said, "Let me tell you something. You work for Marvel, you're going to get a lot of [flak]." He didn't want me to feel that I would get work—if that was my inclination—because of his name, or to have people treat me poorly because my last name was the same as his.

X-Men, Romita Jr.-style

Did you get resentment from other pros, due to the fact that you're the son of an artist with a lot of industry status?

I was really disliked by a lot of people in the industry. I think I still am to a certain extent, because I have a father in the industry. I think it's more so than the Kuberts [artist Joe Kubert's sons Adam and Andy] have ever gotten, although I can't be sure. It wasn't just paranoia. It was an obvious thing, perhaps because I got work at such a young age [19]. Maybe it was that people felt that, because I was John Romita Jr., they could vent on me their anger towards Romita Sr., who was the art director at the time, telling people they weren't good enough. But [editor] Marie Severin was receptive, because she was objective, and she gave me some work, and so did [editor] Archie Goodwin. I was doing art corrections, and sketches for the British department [Marvel UK]. Then [editor] Scott Edelman walked into my father's office one day in 1976 and said [to me], "I don't believe in nepotism, but I don't believe in anti-nepotism, either. Would you like to do *Iron Man*?" And it kind of snowballed after that.

On *Iron Man*, you were working with writer Dave Michelinie and inker Bob Layton. Who was in control there?

They both were, because they were doing the plotting. I was the young punk, and—even though Bob was only a couple of years older than me—he was already a veteran. He was doing finished inks and I was just doing breakdowns, so I had a very small part in it.

But a lot of people consider that three-year period the definitive *Iron Man* run.

I won't take any credit for it, because I was so young and inexperienced. Michelinie liked what I was doing. Layton might have liked what I was doing, but I think he liked the end result better. He was a heavy-handed inker on me, because I was an inexperienced artist. If it was definitive, I give them the credit for it. They were great stories, and they took Iron Man out of the squeaky-clean mode, but I don't think it was great, because I didn't like the artwork.

After that first *Iron Man* run, you went over to a title which had your father's fingerprints all over it—*Amazing Spider-Man*. Was that daunting at all, inviting the inevitable comparisons?

Yeah. To tell you the truth, I didn't think of it as being compared to my father, because there's no way in hell I *could* be compared to my father. I just wasn't very good, and in fact I still think I have so much room for improvement. Any artist that doesn't think so probably has a problem, because he'll never get any better. However, it was such a great challenge, to see if I could do it. I at least got myself a toehold at that point; [it was] such a young age to be doing Spider-Man and actually getting paid for it! Not that much, though. I was getting $38 a page back then. The fact that [the art] wasn't anywhere near as good as my father, well...he kept on encouraging me. "You're going to get better," he'd say. "Don't get frustrated."

And were you frustrated?

Hell, yeah. I used to rip paper up constantly. It started out in my head looking a certain way, but by the time it had inched its way down my shoulder through my elbow and into my hand, it came out like [standard] John Romita Jr., and I got pissed off. I wasn't getting good enough fast enough.

Obviously, someone was sufficiently impressed with your work to offer you *Uncanny X-Men*, which was the industry's top-selling title at the time.

[*Uncanny X-Men* writer] Chris Claremont called me and asked, "Would you like to work on the X-Men?" And I said, "Whoa! Are you sure you're calling the right number?" I had worked with Claremont on [*Uncanny X-Men*

The *DD* story I.R. Jr. co-plotted with Ann Nocenti

Annual #4, 1980], called "Nightcrawler's Inferno," and he must have seen something there he liked. Then I got a call from [former *Uncanny X-Men* artist] John Byrne, who told me, "Your brain will be fried within three years." And he was right! [*Laughs*]

It became a really tough job, but I still jumped at the chance because it was exciting and because John Byrne had worked on the book. I followed [artist] Paul Smith, and I got hate letters! "How dare you replace Paul Smith? You're not fit to shine his shoes!" So when I worked on the X-Men, I felt like I was getting on a highway while on a tricycle.

How long did that run on *X-Men* last?

Almost four years, 45 issues.

Did you eventually stop getting hate mail?

I stopped getting hate mail, but I never got any complimentary mail. Chris Claremont got most of the credit for it, and the book sold well, regardless of who the artist was. Then royalties kicked in and all of a sudden I was making some real money, but I didn't have any input in the book, and nobody was giving me any kind of credit.

Then [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Jim Shooter came to me and said, "It's time for you to try something different." He offered me *Secret Wars* first [which was eventually drawn by Mike Zeck], and then he gave me *Star Brand* [as part of Marvel's New Universe imprint], which he thought would be the next Superman, the new Marvel flagship character. He really blew smoke up my butt. The intentions were there, though, and I got to work with [inker] Al Williamson, so how bad could it be?

As much as Shooter was disliked, however, he really helped me out quite a bit as far as my storytelling abilities go. He pushed and forced me to become a good storyteller. I credit him for being a really tough boss, but the book was just a flop, so I decided to get off that book.

What did you do next?

I went to [editor] Ralph Macchio and said I'd like to work on *Daredevil*. I wanted something with simple stories and simple characters. That's how I sort of turned the corner and started becoming a human being again. That's when comics started becoming fun again.

When you started *Daredevil* with #250, it was a whole new creative team, with Ann Nocenti as writer and Al Williamson coming with you as inker.

Al inked every issue that I did. It was an interesting combination, because Ann was such a politically correct person; not a radical *per se*, but the kind of liberal that Rush Limbaugh hates, and I'm a meat-and-potatoes/construction worker/redneck type. She turned out to be a great writer and a fun person to work with, and the book got strong and did well. I was able to do full pencils, and I had a lot of control. One issue I co-plotted was "A Beer with the Devil" [#266], and I was really proud of that. It was like a one-act play.

This is where I believe you really came into your own artistically, and began developing a distinctive style. What changed?

I finally got to do full pencils instead of just breakdowns, so I was in charge of both storytelling and visuals. Doing *X-Men* was kind of like climbing a greased pole, but now I was in charge of my destiny.

At this point, do you think you finally stepped out of your father's shadow?

I don't think I ever have. Everything I draw, I try to visualize as if it were my father's drawing. I don't want to step out of his shadow, because it gives me encouragement to get better. It's pretty much the shadow of my father, and Kirby, and John Buscema, and illustrators that my father introduced me to. I felt like I finally developed my own style when I was doing *Daredevil*, because I felt in control. When I was doing *X-Men*, Chris Claremont was the control man, and I always felt like I had a leash around my throat. On *Daredevil*, it was the turning point, because I started becoming the artist I wanted to become.

Why did you leave *Daredevil*, if you were having so much fun?

Daredevil had started to wear thin. After my favorite stretch on the book, which was the Mephisto/Blackheart story, it started getting off onto tangents. Daredevil left New York City and ended up in farm country, fighting for animal rights, and the sales started slipping. I started losing interest then, so I guess you can call me fickle.

So, first, I spoke to Frank Miller in 1987 about doing what eventually became the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* mini-series. And while I was working on that, John Byrne came along and said, "Let's work on *Iron Man*."

Romita Jr.'s Punisher, inked by Klaus Janson.

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Whose idea was it to do the *Daredevil: Man Without Fear* project, yours or Frank Miller's?

I called Frank with the idea of doing a Wolverine graphic novel. He said, "There's too much stuff coming out with Wolverine. Why don't we try something else?" A couple weeks later, he called and said he had this Daredevil script, which was originally [for] a movie that for some reason didn't come together. He thought he could bang [it] together into a comic plot for a 64-page graphic novel.

It kind of grew in the telling, I assume?

He thought it might not be enough, so we might want to add a couple more pages. [*Laughs*] It ended up being 80 more. Working with Frank was the most fun because of the end result, but it was a hysterical run of events. With Frank working on his movies [*RoboCop 2* and *3*], he disappeared for eight months at a time, and I was left to work on the book with no input from Frank. Then he'd appear all of a sudden and say, "I have an addendum to it." I thumbnailed it out, and in between page four and five there was an 85-page bridge. So it ended up being 144 pages of artwork. I did two years' worth of artwork on it, and it took four years for the damn thing to hit the stands.

At what point was it decided to shift formats from graphic novel to limited series?

I think [then Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Tom DeFalco suggested it because it would have been too high a unit price, and Tom didn't want to take a chance of it dying on the shelf. They thought the right way was to do it as a five-part series, and then come out with the trade paperback and the hardcover, and it ended up being correct. It sold really well. I think the end justified the means, because it's as nice a piece as I've done in the industry.

It earned you more critical acclaim than anything else you had done.

Yeah, I think so. It didn't win any awards, but Marvel titles generally don't win any fan awards. Nobody really cares for Marvel's products in the fan magazines.

After *Iron Man*, you went into Punisher mode, right?

I was offered the Punisher, which at the time was a strong character who was also waning. They created a new title [*Punisher War Zone*]. I got to work with [inker] Klaus Janson, and I was also able to do whatever I pleased. [Series writer] Chuck Dixon told me, "You'll have as much input as I do." I didn't actually redesign the Punisher, but I made him look like one of my uncles, with the busted nose and scratched-up face.

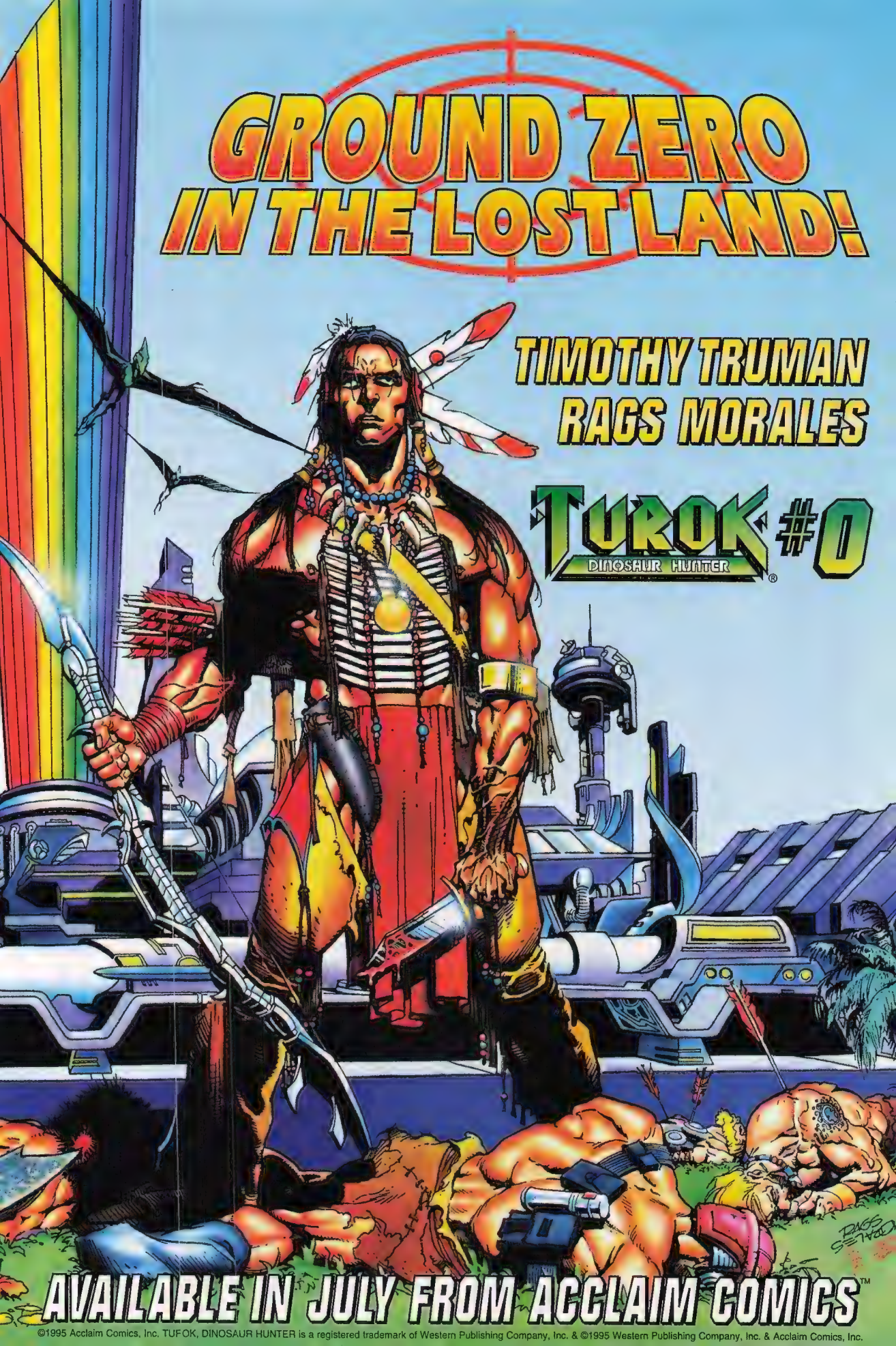
You did eight issues of *War Zone*, and later the *Punisher/Batman* book.

That was a lot of fun, but it sold nothing. That's lying at the bottom of somebody's bird cage. I was very surprised. Maybe it was the fact that it was a $5 issue, and maybe because it was at the beginning of the downslide of the industry. If it had come out a year earlier, it would have sold a million copies. But I got to do Batman, and I got to do the Joker, which I just had an absolute rip on. I loved every minute of it.

You returned to *Uncanny X-Men* for about a year, but that didn't last. What happened?

I feel I was ripped off. When I was doing *X-Men*, they told me I was included in the big plans for the X-titles. I was going to stick with the X-Men, but then I was offered the *Punisher/Batman* job. I asked the X-people if I could do that and then come back, and they said, "No problem!" But when I got done, there were no X-Men titles to come back to. They had filled the job with Joe Madureira, and there was nothing in the offing. To appease me, they told me I'd be working on the *X-Men: Year One* series that was supposed to be huge for '95, and gave me a couple of side jobs. I worked with Kelly Corvese, who suddenly turned into a very strange editor. He went from being very friendly to holding me up five weeks for a plot and then demanding I finish the book in two weeks. So I said, "I'm not working for you guys anymore," and I called [then Spider-Man Group Editor] Danny Fingeroth. At that point, I was a man without a title, and Danny said he'd get me some side work until he could find me something more regular, and that's where it's been.

Spidey with Romita Jr. and Sr. penciling and inking, respectively. Top: Jr.'s second stint on *Iron Man*.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RAGS MORALES
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How does it feel to be back on Spider-Man?

After doing *X-Men* for any length of time, anything is a cakewalk. The Spider-Man thing [happened] at the last second, but I've always wanted to go back to Spider-Man, because I'm sick of the way he's looked over the last couple of years, the McFarlane style. I want to take him back to some semblance of normalcy. People were copying [former Spider-Man artist] Erik Larsen's style, and Spider-Man doesn't look like Spider-Man anymore, just some bony-looking character with huge eyes. Right now, I'm working on *Spider-Man: The Lost Years*, about [clone] Ben Reilly's lost years. It's kind of like *Spider-Man: Man Without Fear*.

As soon as I did *Daredevil: Man Without Fear*, it seemed like everybody felt I could do non-superhero storylines. I can't imagine some artists in the industry drawing [*The Lost Years*]. There are no costumes. There's a lot of street scenes, a lot of cars, a lot of rain, motorcycles, long coats, long hair. It's three issues, and when I finish I will be doing the [ongoing *Spider-Man*] title, and I'm excited about that because [writer] Howard Mackie and I will be working on that book and we're going to make some great strides and a lot of changes. [EDITOR'S NOTE: It was undecided as of press time which issue would be his first.] This book is not going to be the standard Spider-Man book. It will be darker, a lot more intense. Spider-Man's always been a light-hearted character, but this will be different, and hopefully it will be the best one there is. I feel like I'm on the ground floor of a character again, where I can shape it. Howard is a great writer and a friend, respectful of my work, and I'm really looking forward to it. The best thing is that Al Williamson will ink the book.

You've spent your entire career at Marvel so far, but would you ever work for DC or another comic company?

Not at the present time. I'm with Marvel for the next six years. I signed a contract for three years with a three-year option, which is very generous. The reason I stay with Marvel is because they are good to me. They always have been, and it seems that they always will be. I've had my run-ins with editors, but Marvel as a whole has always treated me well, so I will reward loyalty with loyalty and hopefully they will do the same.

Once my father and mother retire from their jobs, who knows? There's so many new faces up at Marvel I don't know, but as long as the five editors-in-chief stay there—those are the people I've grown up with—as long as there's somebody familiar that I'm friends with, I'll stay with Marvel.

Several creators today are producing their own products, of which they retain ownership. Do you plan on doing a creator-owned project yourself?

Marvel has offered me that option. If I come up with a character, it's mine. At this point, they'll let me do whatever I please, as long as it's within certain parameters. I have no need to fulfill any kind of goal that way. If I'm just a good artist, that's good. I don't have to be a creator and an entrepreneur and a writer. I'd rather be great at one thing than good at lots of things.

So you won't be trying to become a writer-artist, like many of your contemporaries?

No, because I have so much to learn and do as an artist. I've written, just not with words. Storytelling is my writing. I've got plots coming out of my ears. I will write. It's just that I'm not as eloquent as most writers are, and I don't think I should do something that I'm not going to be really good at. I just want to be at a certain point as an artist before I try to become a writer, and I still have a long way to go. ★

Paul J. Grant, who interviewed Neal Adams in issue #46, has a beard. Riker from ST:TNG *has a beard, too. Beards are fun.*

FATHER KNOWS BEST

John Romita Sr. offered lots of advice when his son considered a career as a comic book artist. Fortunately, John Jr. didn't listen.

"He could see how I was always killing myself to meet deadlines, but he just didn't seem to mind," says John Sr. "I think he secretly knew that he was faster than the old man, so he wouldn't have to worry about it," he laughs.

Romita Sr. also worried about his son taking a staff job at Marvel after graduating from college. "Some people in the company told him to his face that he wouldn't be there if he weren't my son," he says. "That bothered him, but it didn't deter him. I admired him for that."

Some see the elder Romita's style showing through, but Dad doesn't. "His style is very distinctly his own. I'm very pleased there's no clone in him."

Romita Sr. maintains that he always likes his son's next work best, especially what he's seen of the current *Spider-Man: The Lost Years* mini-series.

Dad's a big fan overall. "He's got a wonderful design sense and adds a strong human-interest element. Few artists can achieve that combination. And he's a hell of a storyteller, too," he says.

Father and son have collaborated on several books as inker and penciler respectively, including *Uncanny X-Men* #177, *Amazing Spider-Man* #238, #247, and *Annual* #16, and backup stories in the recent *ASM* #400 and *Spider-Man* #57. On working together, Romita Sr. says, "I would love to ink his stuff more regularly and try to bring something to it, but schedules always get in the way. I'm looking forward to working with him again."

And what does John Romita Jr. think of the collaboration? "It's great because he fixes all the mistakes," Jr. laughs. "Truth is, it's an honor, because I've admired his work all my life. When we worked together it made me feel like I was at least in the same ballpark. I may have been up in the cheap seats and he's down in the box seats, but at least I was in the same ballpark as him. And the obvious part is he makes the artwork 20 times better than what it is."

As to how Jr. will handle his own kids when they wish to become comic book artists, he'll follow a familiar flight plan. "Hopefully, I'll handle it with the same quality that my father handled it. Basically, he did the right thing, because he didn't want me to feel like I had to do anything. If I have pleased my father because I'm an artist, that's worth it all. But as far as my children becoming artists, I'll do the exact same thing my father did, and just let them do what they want to do."

—Craig Shutt

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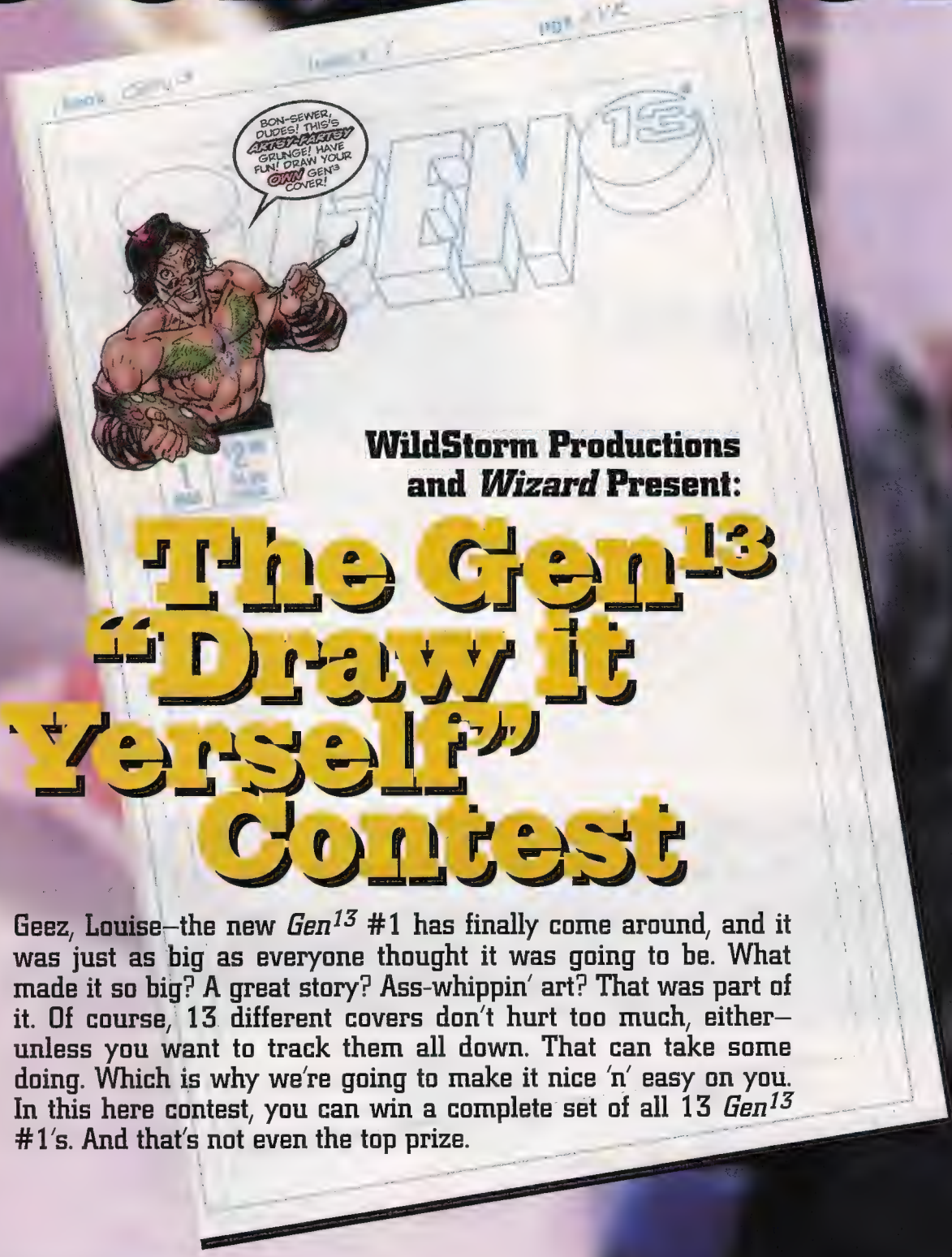

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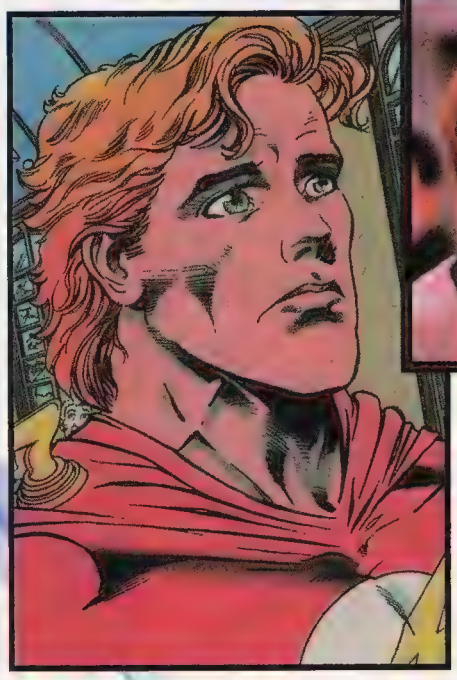
For a list of winners, available after September 15, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Gen13 "Draw it Yerself" Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

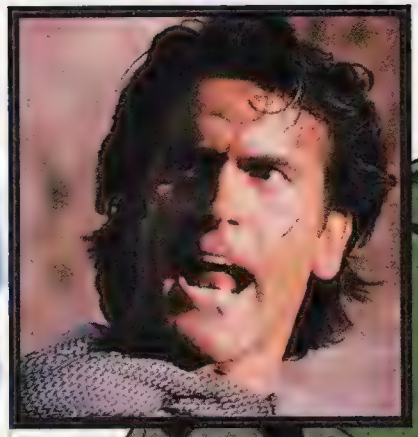
Wizard's Justice League movie!

Casting call

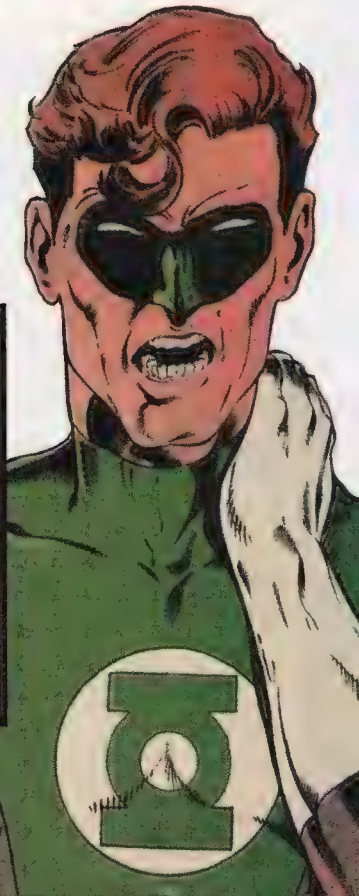
Anybody remember that super-cheesy 1970s *Legends of the Super-Heroes* live-action TV special featuring a buncha DC Comics heroes? (Well, OK, Hawkman looked cool, but everyone else looked pretty bad.) But hey—superhero enthusiasts nearly crapped in their pants with joy because it simply existed. Imagine, if a tried-and-true Justice League of America movie was made, featuring DC's greatest heroes, it would be super-groovy. So that's what we did by teaming the coolest Leaguers and their enemies on one screen. In our perfect *Wizard* world, directing would be Steven Spielberg (*Jurassic Park*, the Indiana Jones flicks), with FX done by ILM. So, here's our perfect Justice League movie!



FLASH
This Flash'll be the current Wally West version. (Hey, we love Barry Allen as much as the next guy, but he's been dead for 10 years and Wally's got a nicer butt.) Eric Stoltz (*Pulp Fiction, Little Women, Mask*) is perfect.



GREEN LANTERN
We'll keep Hal Jordan around in this one; he's still a favorite 'round here. Portraying him would be Bruce Campbell (*Army of Darkness, The Adventures of Brisco County Jr.*). He'd be a cinch.



By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

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WONDER WOMAN

So we're lookin' for an Amazon, eh? How 'bout bodybuilder Rachel McLish? She looks like she could throw around a tank or two.

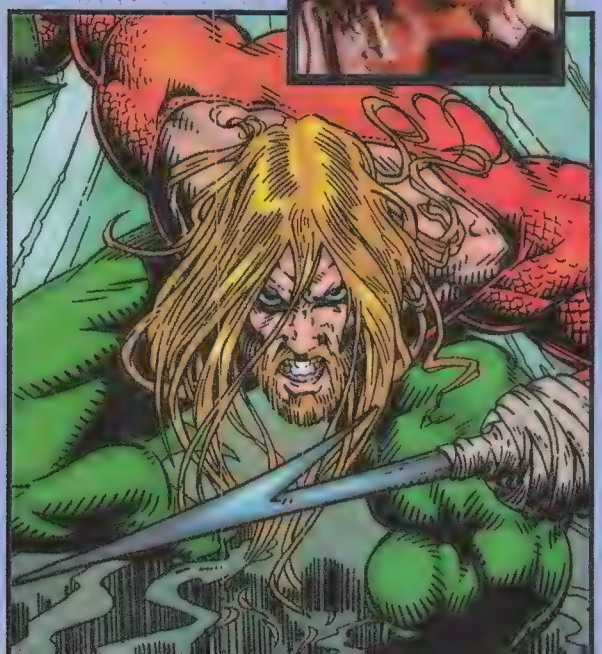
GREEN ARROW

Cary Elwes has the archer experience from his *Robin Hood: Men in Tights* role, and can wisecrack with the best of 'em.

Photo: Tony Duffy for All Sport

AQUAMAN

With Arthur's current look, Kenneth Branagh (*Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Dead Again*) would be solid playing the former sea king. He could even speak in Shakespearean soliloquys, if we wanted.



MARTIAN MANHUNTER

We need a pretty big dude with a huge freakin' forehead for J'onn J'onzz. WWF superstar Lex Luger fits the bill. Just shave him and paint him green.

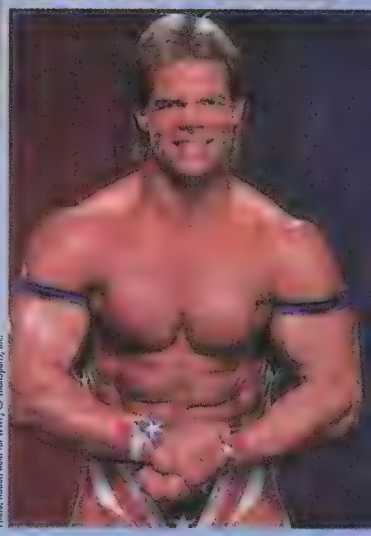
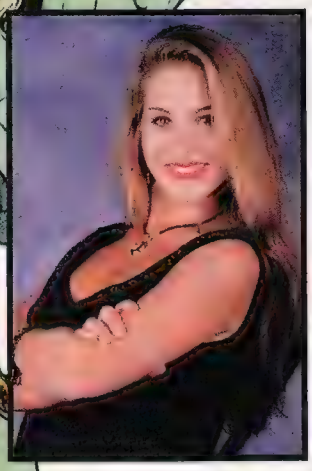


Photo: Robert Reiff for WWF, © TitanSports, Inc.

MAXWELL LORD
We think Sam Neill (*Jurassic Park*) was the model for Mr. Lord, so he's our best bet.

FIRE
Hmm, slinky outfit? Sexy? Sense of humor? Well, serve up Christina Applegate (*Married...with Children*) and you've got Fire down pat.



We would've added major heroes (and in-and-out Leaguers) Superman and Batman to the fold, but since they've already had their own flicks, we figured we'd let the other heroes bask in the spotlight. And rounding out our villain team to wreak havoc on the world...

CHEETAH
Supermodel Elle MacPherson (drooool), who made her acting debut in the movie *Sirens*, is great for someone who's as sleek as the Cheetah.

REVERSE-FLASH
William Sadler (*Tales From the Crypt: Demon Knight, Die Hard 2*) would do a good job at playing Professor Zoom.

"FOR CENTURIES, I HAVE SEEN A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD [illegible] OUR KIND. THE STRUGGLE FOR [illegible] AND CONTROL IS DRIVEN BY PASSIONS OF LOVE AND DESIRE, BUT [illegible] CONSUMED BY GREED AND ENVY ONE CANNOT [illegible] THE OTHER. [illegible] WAR OF [illegible] ESPECIALLY [illegible] THE CAMARILLA, THERE ARE [illegible] CLANS, SOCIETIES OUTSIDE OUR AUGUST COVENANT [illegible] AGAINST US [illegible] GIOVANNI [illegible] AS MUCH A PART OF [illegible] FULL [illegible] JUST A LIST FOR [illegible] VAMPIRES [illegible] WORLD ARE TRUTH THE DARK [illegible] OF OUR KIND"

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SINESTRO
Woof, woof, woof! OK, OK—enough. Yeah, the former late-night talk show host (and star of *Coming to America*) would be a perfect Sinestro. He's got the hair and everything. Plus, he needs the job.

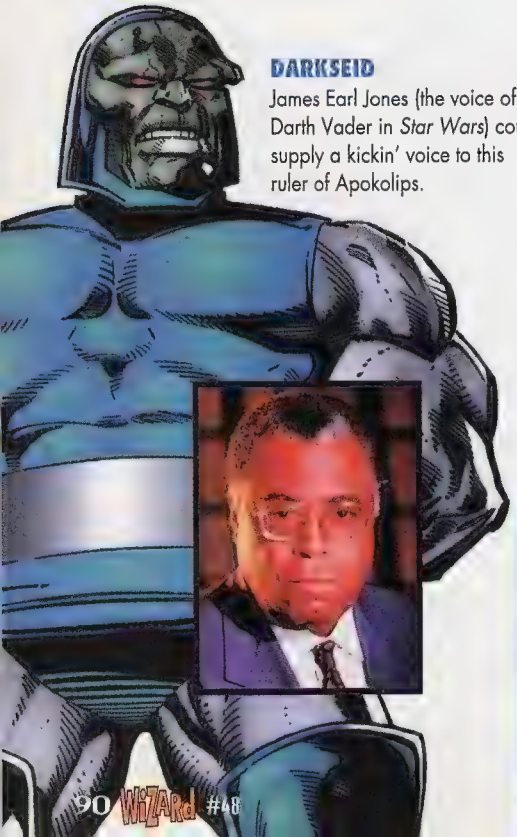
DESPERO
Despero (the maliciously evil version) needs a big guy to play him. Ron Pearlman (the Beast in TV's *Beauty and the Beast*) would do 'im justice.

Photo: Mike Guastella for Star File

CIRCE
Wonder Woman needs a sexy villainess to complement her own sexiness, so hey, Deborah Unger (*Highlander 3, Whispers in the Dark*) is perfecto for that job.

BLACK MANTA
Well, since we rarely see who's behind that clunky helmet, it doesn't matter who we cast. But whenever we do, Wesley Snipes (*Rising Sun, New Jack City*) is key.

DARKSEID
James Earl Jones (the voice of Darth Vader in *Star Wars*) could supply a kickin' voice to this ruler of Apokolips.



OK, so that wraps that. Knowing that big bad ol' Warner Bros., those folks that own DC Comics, has money to sling around, a Justice League movie might be a possibility. But then again, it seems big stars want a movie all to themselves instead of sharing the spotlight. What ever happened to the days of "an all-star cast"? Ah, well. Think big, think big... ☆

The Wizard *staff likes to cross-dress. Wanna make somethin' of it? Huh, buddy?*

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See fellow fans get mulched by an animatronic Evil Ernie at a summer convention near you

Summer Slaughter

It takes a steady hand

You thought the *mask* was scary!

By Marc Shapiro • Photos By Jim McHugh

He's big! He's decomposing! He's just plain evil! And he's coming to a comic book convention near you! Chaos! Comics will unleash a full-sized, fully mechanized Evil Ernie on fans and foes alike this summer.

"We're sending out invitations to a select group of fans who will be murdered by Ernie at selected cons," says Chaos! spokesperson Francisca Pulido. "We've got a whole slew of fans who would love to be killed by Ernie."

This walking terror, a 6-foot-9-inch man inside a 7-foot costume, is an animatronic nightmare courtesy of special effects pro Michael Burnett.

"Ernie is fully animatronic," says the affable Burnett who recently worked on the *Batman*-like film *Black Scorpion* for producer Roger Corman. "We've molded the costume illusion that the skin is decomposing and that all he has is bones. It's sort of a magician's illusion. We've also modified Ernie's leather jacket in order to give him more of a cartoon feel.

"The face is going to move and the eyes are going to glow," adds Burnett. "And, at certain points, a very visible sense of Ernie's energy will shoot out of his stomach. Some of the effects will be controlled by the man in the suit, while one of my crew will be out of sight controlling the other facial and body movements."

Burnett indicates that this monster-sized Ernie has an ulterior motive. "At some point we're going to shoot a demo reel to hopefully interest some people in an Evil Ernie movie."

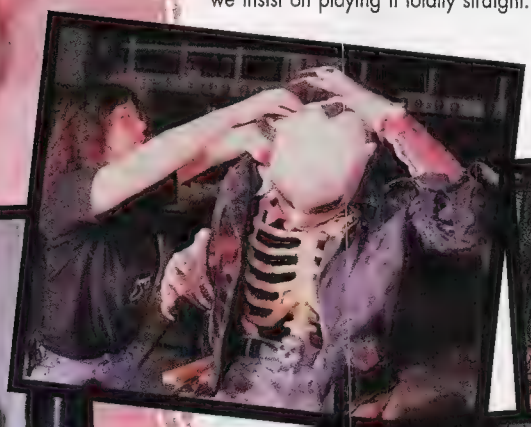
Pulido, wife of Evil Ernie creator Brian Pulido, reports that Chaos! is currently in negotiations with Harley Davidson to bring a cycle on tour for Ernie to ride. She also adds fuel to the notion that Evil Ernie has a movie in his future.

"We have a script and we've been in negotiations with a few people," she explains. "But we're having problems with the perception people have of Ernie and the directions they want to take him in. Some people want to make Ernie a comedy and we insist on playing it totally straight. People like the Evil Ernie comic books because the bad guy wins and that's a *big* hang-up with movie people. The question Ernie poses is, 'Why does the bad guy have to lose?'"

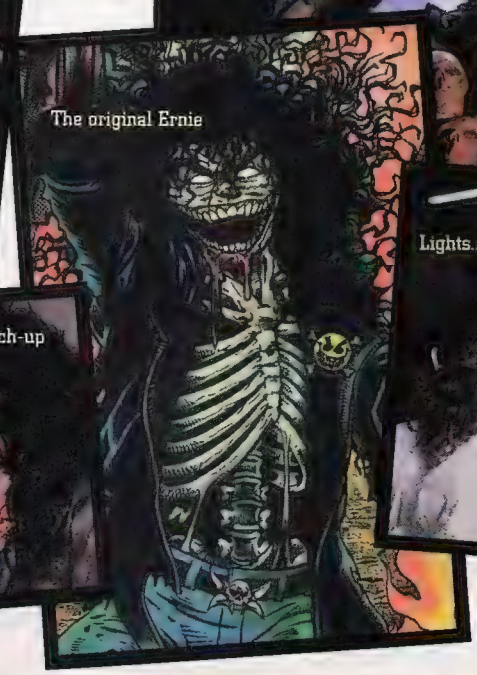
Burnett reports that the Ernie con slaughter will "be done with blood bags and stuff attached to the victim." Pulido, who says a schedule of life-sized Ernie appearances can currently be seen in *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell* #3, laughingly speculates on the havoc Ernie will create at his con appearances.

"This is an R-rated Ernie," she roars. "He's going to scare all the other comic book walkarounds to death. We'll walk him around and the fans will have fun being choked and sliced up by him. It will be a beautiful thing." ☆

Marc Shapiro, a frequent contributor to Cut & Print, isn't too scared of a decomposing killer. He eats guys like that for breakfast. Bad gas, though.



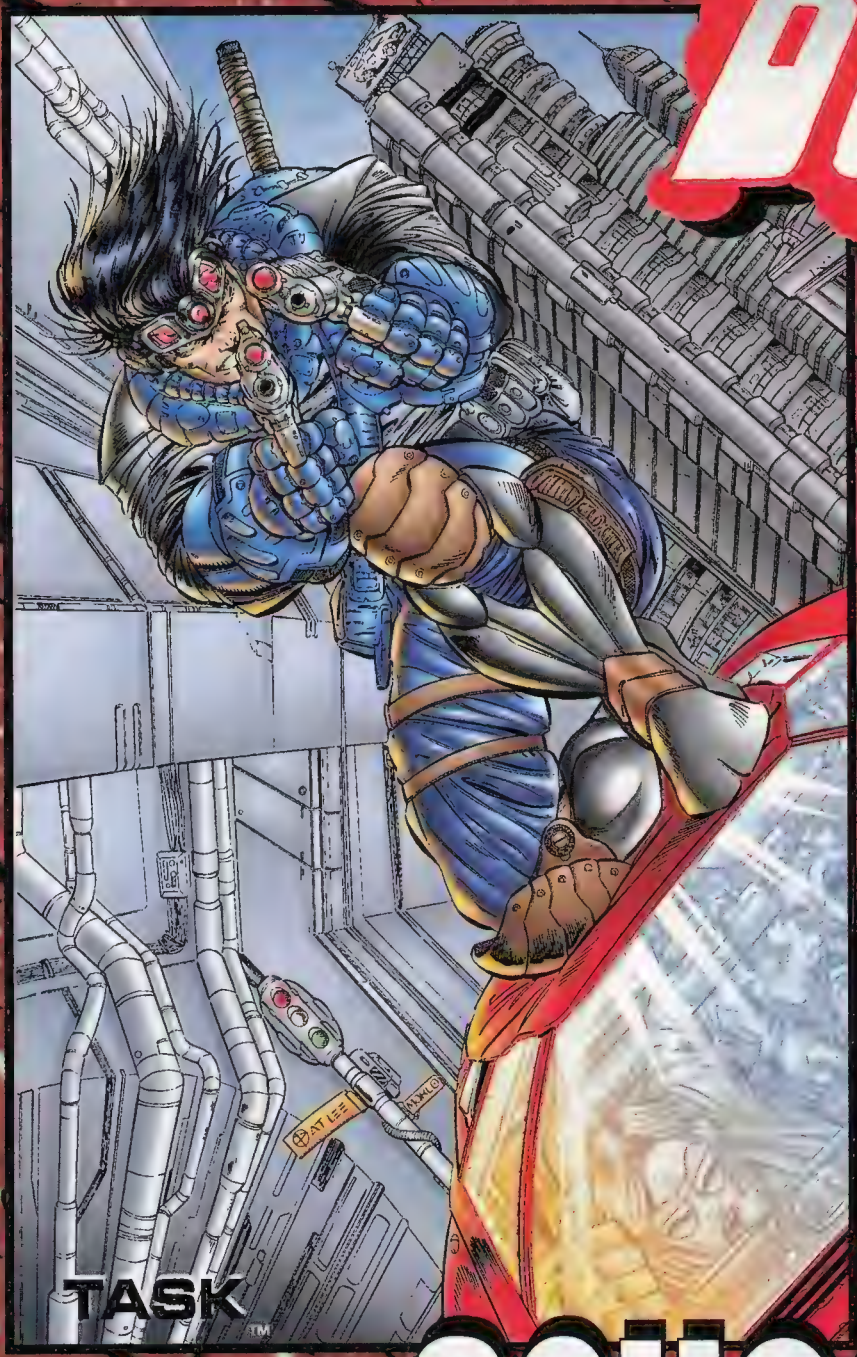
The original Ernie



Final touch-up

Lights...camera...action!

EVIL ERNIE ™ & © Brian Pulido



BLOOD

WRITTEN BY JO (GLORY) DUFFY AND FEATURING THE AMAZING TALENT OF PATRICK LEE

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THIS OFFER EXPIRES AUGUST 31, 1995.

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TOYING around • around • around • aroun

WITH SEAN AUNE

AGE OF APOCALYPSE FIGURES!

Toy Biz has announced a new assortment of figures due out later this year. This new series is based on the popular timeflippin' "Age of Apocalypse" storyline that recently ran in the X-Men line of comic books.

The figures announced so far are Wolverine, Magneto, Cyclops, Gambit, Sabretooth with Wild Child sidekick and last, but not least, Apocalypse himself. (Oh, man. Where's the Assassinated Professor X figure?) These figures are due to ship around November or December of this year.

In other Toy Biz news, you can expect to see another four-figure pack exclusive to FAO Schwarz toy stores later this year. This time out, though, they'll be packaged in a blister box for better presentation. The figures include Space Suit Wolverine, Ch'od, Corsair and Dark Phoenix (a repainted version of the regular Phoenix figure). You can also expect the Eric the Red figure to be pushed back until at least early '96.

And for those of you who watch for variations in the X-Men toy line, the entire "Phoenix Saga" assortment (Phoenix, Corsair, Gladiator, Warstar, Space Suit Wolverine) is available on two different cards. The first wave of figures was released on the regular cards that you've been familiar with. The second wave, however, will be on a more colorful card with a picture of Wolverine leaping out at you, and the blister packaging will be a different shape.

Star Wars Figures are Here!!

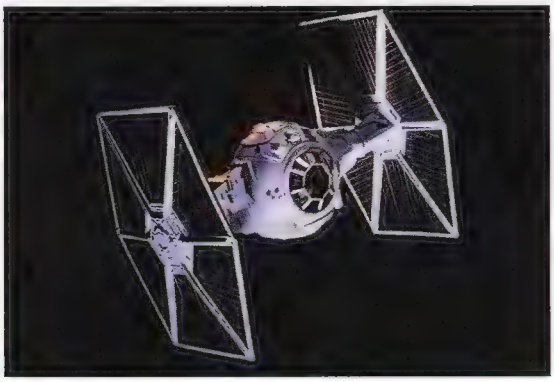
OK, OK—putcher pants back on. Anyway, Kenner is releasing all-new *Star Wars* figures in July. Included in the mix are Luke Skywalker (with lightsaber), Han Solo (with laser rifle and blaster), Darth Vader (with molded cape and lightsaber), Chewbacca (with blaster and bowcaster), C-3PO, R2-D2 (with cool retractable center foot), Ben "Obi-Wan" Kenobi (with molded cloak and lightsaber), Princess Leia Organa (with two authentic blasters and an attitude) and Imperial Stormtrooper (with blasters and a big "easy pickings" bullseye for his chest). What? No Boba Fett??? What the hell's wrong with these guys?! Grrr...

Slightly taller than the older *SW* releases, each figure has a poseable head, arms, legs and waist. (Why can't *Star Wars* figures have joints at the elbows and knees? I *definitely* remember Luke and Han having those joints in the movies! And features like that make a figure that much cooler. Sigh.)

Vehicles include a Landspeeder, TIE Fighter, X-Wing Fighter and Millennium Falcon. The latter of which also acts as a fully functioning playset with all the neato accessories of the older version, like retractable landing skids, rotating radar dish, secret floor panel for smuggling stuff like dead Tauntauns, and an all-new feature: authentic lights and sounds—taken directly from the soundtrack—available at the mere touch of four side buttons. Each vehicle can fit the appropriate amount of figures (i.e., the X-Wing can only fit one, Landspeeder fits two, etc.), although if you butter-up Leia real good, you can probably slide her in right behind Luke in the X-Wing.

Puttin' on the Mask

Kenner will be smokin' this fall with its toy line based on the upcoming Mask television series. Quick-Draw Mask will have spring-action arms that lift up his massive missile shooters. Heads-Up Mask looks just like Stanley Ipkiss until you hit a button and he changes into the Mask. Killin' Time Mask will pop his eyes and tongue out at you while he beats up on an alarm clock with his sledge hammer. Bomb Blast Mask has a pop-out "exploding" stomach and includes a bomb that fits into his opening mouth. Tornado Mask will spin around while holding two mufflers so



Star Wars' TIE Fighter (left) and X-Wing are on their way.

All STAR WARS figures™ & © Lucasfilm Ltd. Background Art™ & © Eclipse.

MEGA CITY'S MOST WANTED

Now, collect all 16 action figures seen in Judge Dredd comics and the summer blockbuster movie. Each figure is realistically detailed right down to its weapons, badges and protective armor. And for even more battle action move their arms and legs into unique action poses.

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MEGA HEROES™

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Star Wars figures from left: Stormtrooper, Darth Vader, Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, Chewbacca, R2-D2, Ben Kenobi and C-3PO

you can recreate his infamous revenge scene from the movie. Face-Blastin' Mask will be dressed like a Frenchman and will have popping-out eyes and tongue. Wild Wolf Mask will have the head of a wolf with pop-out eyes and a jaw that opens. And to help the Mask get around town, he'll be able to jump in the Mask Cycle with a sidecar molded for a special Milo figure that's included with the cycle.

So, OK, there are a lot of Mask guys here, but who else is there gonna be? Well, try out Stanley's cool dog with a Chompin' Milo figure which has a big green head and opening jaws! (Dontcha just love that li'l doggie?) But if it's bad guys you want, then give Heads-Up Dorian a try. Just like the Heads-Up Mask, you'll be able to see the normal-lookin' Dorian, then hit a button and you've got the evil mask-wearing Dorian!

But hey, if action figures aren't your thing, try the Talking Mask Figure which should stand about 11-inches tall, say four wacky sayings from the movie and let loose with the Mask's hilarious laughter. You might also want to try out the Super-Stretch Mask Figure! This figure will have a hard plastic head, but the rest of his body's made of a certain type of rubber that you can stretch out to over 3 feet long (Oh, the things you could do with that...); it'll revert back to its original form when you let it go! And if Milo's your favorite, then sleep easy, 'cause a plush doll replica is on its way.

ReBoot Toys

Irwin Toys is coming out with a line of action figures based on the popular ABC Saturday morning cartoon, *ReBoot*. This animated series, the first 100 percent, computer-generated cartoon, premiered in fall '94 to great success. An interesting (or nauseating) aspect of these toys is that all of them, with the exception of the 3-inch collectible figures, will come with Slammer discs for all you POG players out there.

Set in the world of "Mainframe," a city that exists inside of a personal computer, a guy named Bob fights alongside his friends to stop Megabyte and Hexadecimal from taking over the city for their own evil purposes.

Two versions of the figures will be available, 5 1/2-inch poseable action figures and 3-inch collectible mini-figures. The 5 1/2-inch figures will include Bob with Glitch, Enzo with Zip Board, Megabyte with moving jaw and extendible claws, Hexadecimal with four different face masks, Dot with her Maitre'd Cecil, and Hack & Slash with popping-head action.

To get around "Mainframe," Bob drives his slick V262 Turbo Drophead Car. Its wheels are on a spring system to simulate a hovercraft effect.

The 3-inch figures won't be poseable, but will include Bob standing, Bob on Zip Board, Enzo standing, Enzo on Zip Board, Frisket, Hexadecimal, Hack, Slash, Phong, Megabyte standing and Megabyte with gun.

Also, be on the lookout for a few micro playsets including Megabyte's Throne Room, Hexadecimal's Lair, and Hack & Slash's Vehicle Bay.

Superman Toy Update

In rumor control center, we get lots of mail here asking us about the constant rumors of a Superman line in the works. After like a zillion months of chasing down rumors and leads, we still can't get any toy company to admit to having one in the works. There has been speculation from all sides as to who has the rights (Kenner leads the rumored pack right now), but so far there's no proof to this matter. With a Superman animated series in the works, it's fairly likely, given the success of Kenner's *Batman: The Animated Series* figures, that a Superman line is in development at some toy company. Rest assured, our researching will continue and we'll let you know as soon as possible.

That's it for now. Until next month...see you in aisle 7C!

His name is Sean P. Aune, millionaire. He owns a mansion and a yacht.

ReBoot figures clockwise from left: Hack, Slash, Megabyte, Hexadecimal, Bob, Enzo and Dot Matrix

All REBOOT figures™ & © Mainframe Joint Venture

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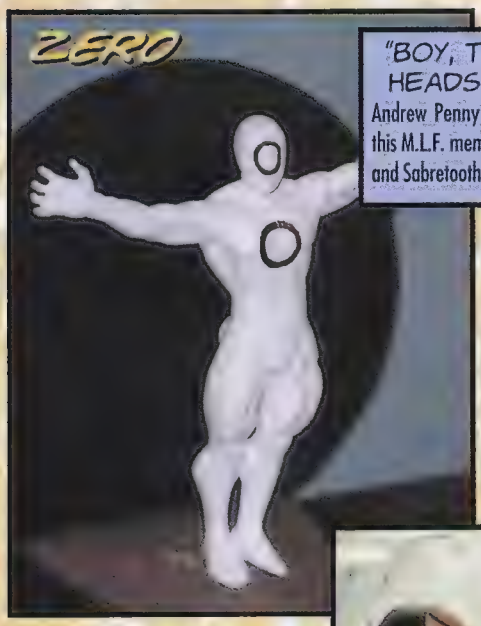
HOMEMADE HEROES

For makin' such totally awesome figures out of some ordinary li'l toys, everyone whose figure sees print this month wins a copy of *Aquaman* #0 signed by Peter David and *Troll* #1 signed by Todd Nauck. The two Runners-Up win all that neat stuff, plus a set of the 10-inch Toy Biz Wolverine, Sabretooth and Cyclops figures, a copy of *Agent Three-Zero* #1 signed by Stephen Platt and an issue of *Amazing Spider-Man* #389 signed by Mark Bagley. The Grand Prize Winner wins all of that stuff *plus* a limited edition, cold-cast porcelain Savage Dragon figure. Congrats to all! **Major thanks to Erik Larsen and Clayburn Moore for the kickin' Dragon piece!**

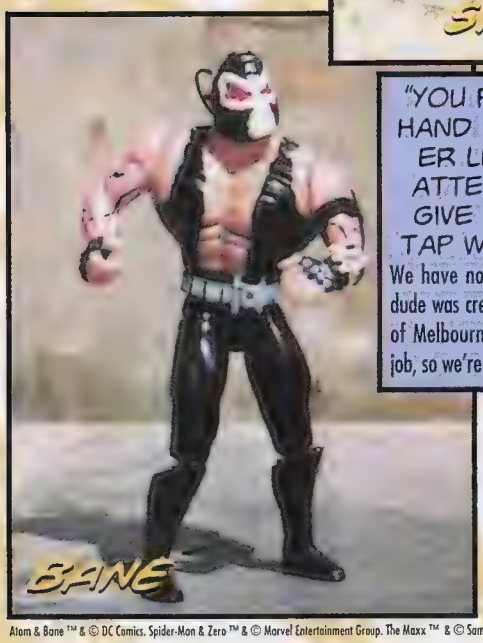
THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.



"BOY, THESE BLACK-HEADS ARE KILLER."
Andrew Penny of Gainesville, Fla., made this M.L.F. member out of a Toy Biz Spidey and Sabretooth figure. Pretty groovy, huh?

"THEE THELLS THEETHELLS BY THE THEE...AH, THIT, THIS OVERBITE THUCKS!"
We have no clue what this cute li'l guy was put together from, but he was made by Reint Scholvinck from the Netherlands, nonetheless. Good going, Reint.

"NOTHING COMES BETWEEN ME AND MY CALVINS."
Peter Parker here was made from an unspecified "cheesy model toy" by Ryan O'Connor of Arlington, Mass.



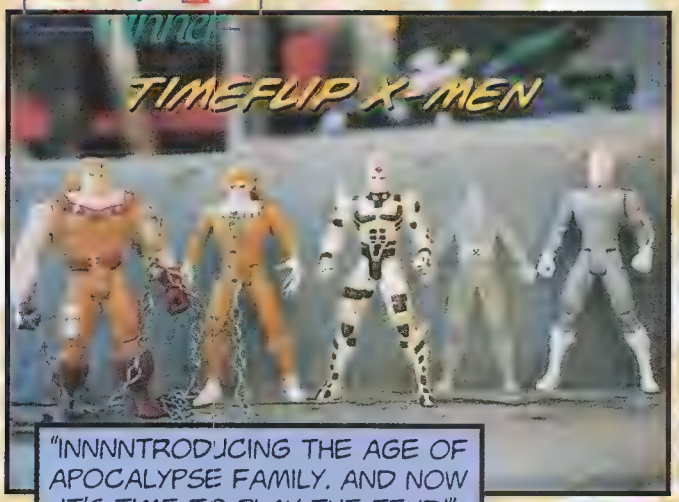
"YOU PUTCHER LEFT HAND IN. YOU PUTCH-ER LEFT...HEY! PAY ATTENTION, OR I'LL GIVE YOU A SPINAL TAP WITH MY BOOT!"
We have no idea what this bat-fearing dude was created from, but Steven Orloff of Melbourne, Australia, did a bang-up job, so we're printing it anyway.

"OH, NO! THAT...THAT'S NOT GAS."
With a custom-made outfit, Mego Spidey body, Mego Batman boots and Mego Captain America head, Troy Younger of Commerce City, Co., made a convincing Mego Atom doll.

Atom & Bane ™ & © DC Comics. Spider-Man & Zero ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. The Maxx ™ & © Sam Kieth. Background Art ™ & © Eclipse.

"WHA—? YOU MEAN YOU DON'T LIKE MY HAND PUPPETS?"
Made from a Tyco Cadillacs and Dinosaurs Hannah Dundee figure, this Excalibur member was crafted by Dave Galan of Sunland, Calif.

SECOND PRIZE winner



"INNNNTRODUCING THE AGE OF APOCALYPSE FAMILY. AND NOW IT'S TIME TO PLAY THE FEUD!"
Hey, neat. Sabretooth was made from a Toy Biz Quark body and Smythe head, Wildchild was made from a Toy Biz Morph figure, Sunfire was made from a Toy Biz Sunspot, and Quicksilver was also made from a Sunspot with a Toy Biz Cable II head. All thanks to Lewis J. Greene II of Oxon Hill, Md.

"TEE-HEE, SILICONE'S FUN!"
Crafted from a Playmates *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* Kira Nerys 9-incher, Anna Schmidt of Houston, Texas, did a great job.

SECOND PRIZE winner

GRAND PRIZE winner

"HMM...CEREBUS HOPES BEES DON'T NOTICE HIM IN FRONT OF HIVE."
Gah! Bruno Aprez from Milano, Italy, hand sculpted Dave Sim's wacky aardvark in this scene taken from the Earth Pig's "High Society" storyline.

hey!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (again, no Polaroids!) to:
Homemade Heroes
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Rachel Summers and X-Men ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. Mantra ™ & © Malibu Comics Entertainment. Cerebus ™ & © Dave Sim.

POWER UP!

By Steve Brown

E³ A SPECIAL *WIZARD* PRESENTATION

It was a dream come true. The powers that be at *Wizard* decided to send me to cover the world's largest videogaming preview show—the E³ show held in Los Angeles in May. Featuring nearly 700,000 gross square feet of exhibition space, the giant spring buying event showcased content for all electronic entertainment platforms. It also included over 375 exhibitors—including leading video game providers and major CD-ROM publishers like Sega, Nintendo, and Acclaim.

E³ was incredible and packed, and—typical of mega-company gatherings—there was huge competition for attention. Sega had the biggest display, with the premiere of the 32-bit Saturn and a plethora of new games. Acclaim, the largest independent software producer, had the most impressive. All of these companies had exciting news about upcoming products, many of which will definitely keep you going while you're waiting for the new video game technology.

Among some of the top announcements at the show were:

1. ACCLAIM HAS OBTAINED RIGHTS TO TODD McFARLANE'S SPAWN. Acclaim's *Spawn* game for the SNES will be available later this year. "There is no doubt Spawn is one of the hottest properties today, having achieved top-selling status in the last two years," says Sam Goldberg, Acclaim's V.P. of marketing. "We hope to establish it in the top strata of video games as well."

2. T•HQ has entered into an agreement with LucasArts to publish *Super Return of the Jedi* for Gameboy and Gamegear later this year.

3. THE DARK KNIGHT BATTLES GOTHAM'S WORST IN ACCLAIM'S NEW *BATMAN FOREVER* VIDEO GAMES. Acclaim's *Batman Forever* features computer-rendered, interactive backgrounds derived from scenes in the film and, for the first time ever in a Batman video game, a two-player cooperative mode which will enable gamers to control both Batman and Robin. Acclaim's *Batman Forever* for the SNES, Genesis, Gamegear and Gameboy will be available this fall. Sony PlayStation (a new, major, pumped-up machine for you video nuts), Sega Saturn and 32X, and PC CD-ROM versions will be available later this year.

BATMAN FOREVER

4. WITH *THE ADVENTURES OF BATMAN & ROBIN*, THE DYNAMIC DUO RETURNS, ready to combat the icy forces of evil. Mr. Freeze and his fellow cronies—The Joker, Scarecrow, Mad Hatter and Two-Face—have teamed up to turn Gotham City into a diabolical winter wonderland. It's up to the Dynamic Duo to turn up the heat and restore peace in Gotham City. Drawn to life by the same animators who created the TX series, this game pushes the Genesis system to new limits with revolutionary technology. Two-player option gives three rotation planes offering new perspectives. 3-D scaling sprites and special effects bring all the characters to life in this ultimate action/adventure experience, which adds up to three games in one. *The Adventures of Batman & Robin* will be available on Genesis in July at a suggested retail price of $59.99.

5. ACCLAIM ENTERTAINMENT, INC.'S NEW *JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE* FOR THE SUPER NES AND GENESIS brings together DC Comics' greatest superheroes of all time in head-to-head battles. Featuring such legendary superheroes as Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Aquaman and Green Arrow, Acclaim's *Justice League Task Force* offers gamers the ultimate two-player showdown, pitting DC Comics' popular superheroes against each other for the very first time in the video game world. Against a backdrop of comic book settings, including "Metropolis," "Gotham City" and "Paradise Island," gamers are armed with special powers and weapons, including Superman's "Freeze Breath," Batman's "Batarang Throw" and The Flash's "Speed Punches." In addition, gamers can play as one of three popular DC supervillains featured in the game, including Cheetah, Despero and Darkseid. *Justice League Task Force* will be available this summer for SNES and Genesis.

6. *X-MEN 2*, FOR PLAY ON THE SNES, IS COMING. The adventures of the world's mightiest mutants have taken a new turn in this sequel based on the Marvel Comics universe. Now players can create original adventures for their favorite X-Men characters that cannot be recreated in comic book form. In a revolutionary video game design, the outcome of the second part of the game

All artwork, games, logotypes and characters are ™ & © their respective owners

depends on which X-Men character the player chooses to control. Each character affects the outcome of the story differently and creates alternate endings to the storyline. New heroes and villains join the cast to create one of the most original and riveting superhero action games ever. Special moves and combat tactics have been added to enhance the game play, plus there are guest appearances by Marvel favorites: Spider-Man, the Hulk and Iceman.

7. MARVEL'S X-MEN FACE OFF IN HEAD-TO-HEAD COMBAT IN *CHILDREN OF THE ATOM*. Capcom brings hot arcade translation to next generation systems (the new, over-16-bit systems). An exact translation of the smash coin-operated video arcade version, Sega Saturn's version is scheduled for release in November 1995 and Sony PlayStation's in February 1996. Created by the same talented team behind Capcom's legendary Street Fighter series, *Children of the Atom* is a world-class, head-to-head fighting game featuring six of the most famous X-Men characters and four of their foes—straight from the comic book and hot animated TV series. The game boasts star-caliber characters, including Wolverine, Cyclops, Psylocke, Storm, Iceman and Colossus; and bad guys such as Omega Red, Spiral, Silver Samurai and Sentinel. It also utilizes the actual voices of actors/actresses from the hot syndicated television show. In this game, the X-Men will take a departure from their original setting and enter Capcom's *Street Fighter*-like universe, where it's every man and woman for himself or herself.

SENTINEL OR COLOSSUS? YOU DECIDE

8. X-MEN, THE WORLD-FAMOUS MARVEL HEROES, MAKE THEIR 32X-MEN DEBUT. Wolverine, Bishop, Rogue and Iceman are plunged into "Murderworld," a horrifying theme park filled with madness, murder and mayhem by Arcade, a millionaire murderer-for-hire. Anxious to try out his brand-new killer creation, a holographic projector, Arcade tricks our heroes into battling mutant monsters, evil warlords and killer ninjas in their quest to escape deadly virtual reality. 3-D-rendered graphics and Motion Capture Animation give this game incredible depth and realism, along with amazingly smooth and accurate control. X-Men arrives on store shelves in Fall 1995.

9. ACCLAIM'S *VENOM/SPIDER-MAN: SEPARATION ANXIETY*, still early in development, will offer gamers an intense superhero adventure of the replicating kind, including a small army of Venom spawns to fight off. The rough cut of this game looks promising, and will be available on both Genesis and SNES.

10. *SPIDER-MAN: WEB OF FIRE*, THE WEB-SLINGER DEBUTS ON 32X WITH "X-TREME" ACTION AND GRAPHICS! New York is being reduced to rubble as an incredible energy net slowly turns the Big Apple to applesauce. It's bye-bye Broadway, unless Spidey can destroy the power spires that generate the weird web of evil electricity. Swing into intense action as mesmerizing 3-D-rendered, motion-captured animation and graphics create X-plosive battles and never-before-seen moves from Marvel's main man. *Spider-Man: Web of Fire* swings into stores in Fall 1995.

11. *MORTAL KOMBAT 3* follows the phenomenal success of *Mortal Kombat* and its sequel, *Mortal Kombat II*. Williams Entertainment announced October 13, 1995—Mortal Friday, as they have declared it—as its retail debut. This means the most fervently awaited video game of all time is coming to Super Nintendo, Sega Genesis, Game Boy and Game Gear platforms. *Mortal Kombat 3* (*MK3*) is expected to be a phenomenal success, thanks to an unprecedented multi-media licensing, marketing and promotions blitz. This fall, *MK3* will sweep the nation with a level of frenzy like no other game in history, benefiting from combined multi-million dollar advertising, marketing and public relations campaigns supporting the release of the game, along with: New Line Cinema's *Mortal Kombat* feature film; the *Mortal Kombat* worldwide live tour; New Line Home Video's animated *Mortal Kombat* video; the Hasbro line of action figures and toys; and over 60 licensees representing more than 100 products.

FINISH HIM!

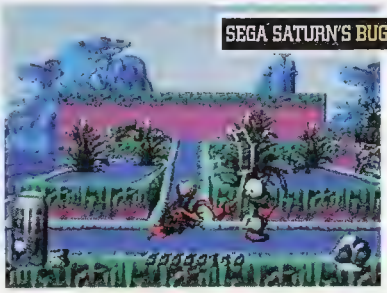
12. IN THE *MIGHTY MORPHIN POWER RANGERS—THE MOVIE* GAME, you can pick your favorite Ranger and join the battle. In this sensational Genesis adventure, based on the Power Rangers' big-screen debut, our favorite teen heroes battle an ancient evil force named Ivan Ooze, who's returned after six thousand years. Gamers can kick, punch and fight through numerous levels of action-packed fun as the Power Rangers try to stop this slimy villain. Along the way, Rita Repulsa, Zedd and Goldar pop up to stir up further trouble. A one- or two-player game, the curtain rises for *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers—The Movie* on Genesis in October.

13. THE 3DO COMPANY UNVEILED ITS HIGHLY ANTICIPATED, NEXT-GENERATION M2 TECHNOLOGY. 3DO's M2 64-bit architecture is designed to deliver a quantum leap in advanced CD entertainment technology. M2 technology rivals image quality and performance of workstations and the most popular arcade machines. Each of the multiple M2 processors is dedicated to specific tasks to optimize superior image quality and performance. These processors are supported by the powerful system resources that M2 technology provides, including a 64-bit data bus, 48 megabits of memory, and a memory subsystem capable of delivering 528 megabytes per

M2 TECHNOLOGY IS HERE!

second. The release date is rumored to be late 1995, and as a 3DO add-on, you need a core 3DO System plus the M2 upgrade, which is expected to be $150-$200 more.

14. CONSUMER DEMAND DRIVES THE EARLY RELEASE OF SEGA SATURN—130,000 Sega Saturn units were released in early May. Sega of America anticipates that the units available now will immediately sell out in the U.S. Sega Enterprises estimates more than 600,000 units by year's end. The "Ferrari" of video game systems, Sega Saturn retails between $399 and $449 and already has more than 12 software titles that appeal to a broad cross-section of video game enthusiasts—with a special emphasis on arcade hits and sports games. More than 80 first- and third-party software titles are expected to hit retail shelves by Christmas this year. Sega Saturn's launch line-up includes the games *Virtua Fighter* and *Daytona U.S.A.*, plus original titles such as *Panzer Dragoon*, *BUG!* and *Clockwork Knight*.


SEGA SATURN'S BUG!

15. THE SUPER NES VERSION OF *KILLER INSTINCT* IS A FAITHFUL TRANSLATION OF THE ARCADE GAME—complete with the computer-rendered graphics and multi-hit combination moves which have set a brand-new gold standard for arcade fighting games. Currently, Rare, Ltd. is developing a different version of *Killer Instinct* for release on the Nintendo Ultra 64. Nintendo and Rare's combined efforts will produce arcade-style graphics similar to those on 32-bit systems, but for the price of a 16-bit cartridge. The game consists of one-on-one battles fought in all-new, beautifully rendered settings and backgrounds. *Killer Instinct* is scheduled for release August 30, 1995, with a price (MSRP) of $74.95. *Killer Instinct* will also be released for Nintendo's portable, hand-held video game system, Game Boy, in November.

"CAN YOU GIVE ME A PIGGYBACK RIDE?"

16. THE REVOLUTIONARY NINTENDO ULTRA 64 HOME VIDEO GAME SYSTEM HAS BEEN COMPLETED, now that Silicon Graphics has finished the system's final chipset. Nintendo of America Inc. announced that it will launch the industry's only true 64-bit platform in April of 1996, in both North America and Europe, with a number of revolutionary games, all exclusive to Nintendo Ultra 64. Nintendo will officially unveil Nintendo Ultra 64 at its annual Video Game Exhibition on November 24-26, 1995 in Makuhari, Japan and at the Consumer Electronics Show on January 5, 1996 in Las Vegas, Nevada. "After 19 months of intense development, we have attained our two main goals for Nintendo Ultra 64: to develop a chipset capable of delivering the world's best video game experience, and to do it at a price that can deliver a hardware set below $250 retail," said Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo of America. "However, we have made a conscious decision not to rush Nintendo Ultra 64 to market."

NINTENDO'S ULTRA 64

17. SNK CORPORATION OF AMERICA, whose Neo*Geo Home System raised the performance standards for home cartridge systems four years ago with its extremely high-resolution games, announced it will ship 70 titles for its new CD-based arcade system, the Neo*Geo CD. The new hardware unit and all 70 titles will be in stores nationwide by this fall, with the top-loading Neo*Geo unit retailing for $499.99, and games going for $40-$80 apiece, a fraction of their cartridge game cost.

SNK'S NEO*GEO CD SYSTEM

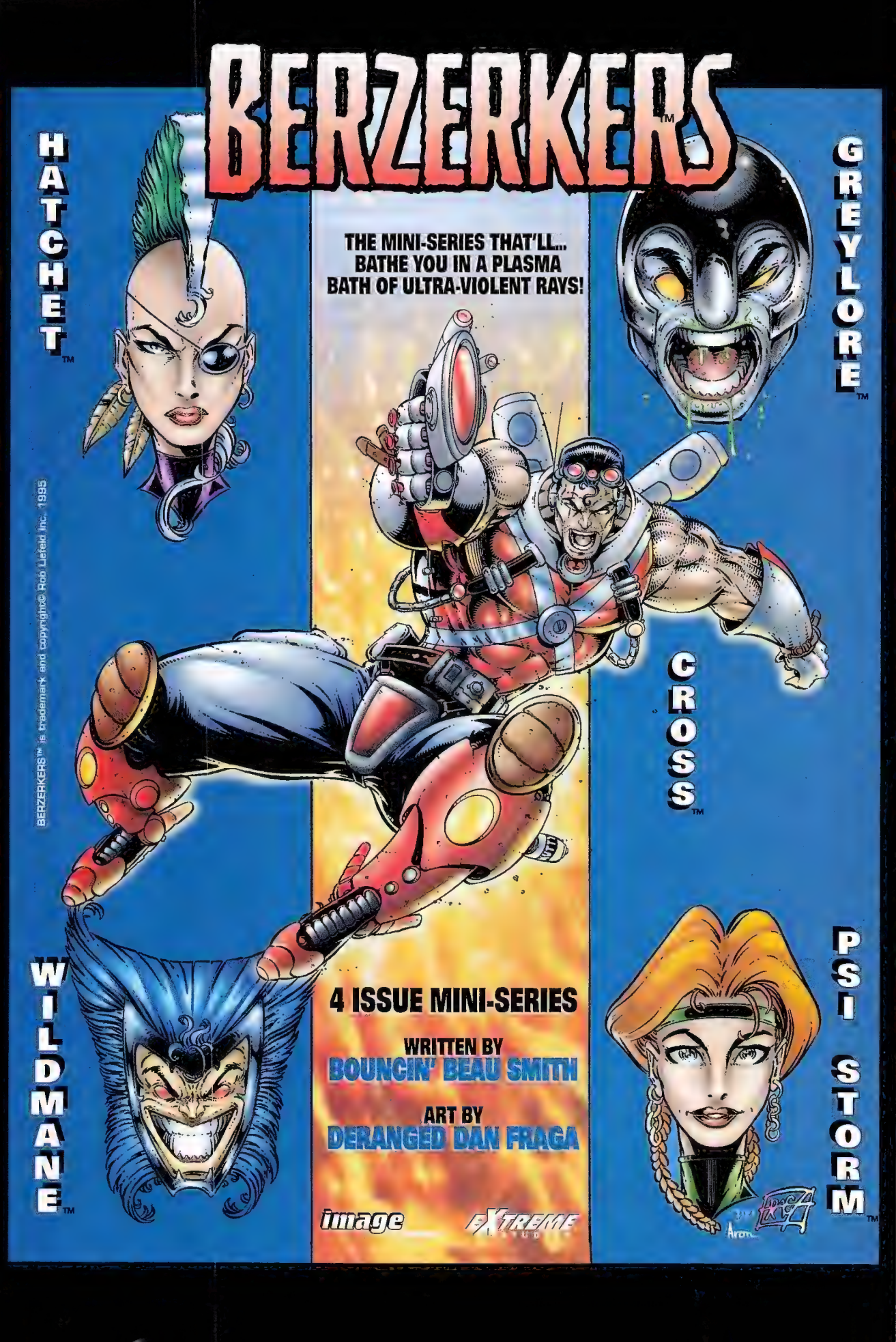
18. *TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER* WILL BE ACCLAIM'S FIRST ULTRA 64 VIDEO GAME. In this game for Nintendo's Ultra 64, Turok escapes back to the 20th century only to find that he has brought the dinosaurs with him. With a first-person perspective, gamers journey through time as Turok overcomes enemies and obstacles from both past and present. Don't expect this one until 1996.

19. THE FIRST *STAR TREK* RELEASE ON THE SEGA 32X PLATFORM, *STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY—THE STARSHIP BRIDGE SIMULATOR* features high-speed 3-D polygon graphics, and over 31 separate and distinct missions utilizing the original crews/adventures (including the *Wrath of Khan* and the *Undiscovered Country* scenarios). It's available in late 1995.

20. *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE—CROSSROADS OF TIME,* the much-anticipated Super Nintendo and Sega Genesis game, will be released in July. It is the first side-scrolling *Star Trek* video game created for the 16-bit system, and is being cross-promoted with Playmates' high-selling action figure line: a special limited-edition Commander Sisko figure is available only with the purchase of the video game.

21. *WILDC.A.T.S: COVERT ACTION TEAMS:* Supported by a CBS Action Zone animated television show, a top-grossing comic book, and a hot-selling action figure line, this action/fighting game has more than 11 levels and boasts "larger-than-life" characters that practically jump off the screen. True to the WildC.A.T.s storyline, teamwork is the name of the game. In order to complete the game, players must assume the identity of three WildC.A.T.s characters—Spartan, the cyborg team leader, Maul, the massive crossbreed warrior, or WarBlade, the morphing hand-to-hand combat expert—and use each of their powers to carry out specific missions. Available in November, on SNES.

JIM LEE MUST BE PROUD.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THE MINI-SERIES THAT'LL...
BATHE YOU IN A PLASMA
BATH OF ULTRA-VIOLENT RAYS!
CROSS™
WILDMANE™
PSI STORM™
4 ISSUE MINI-SERIES
WRITTEN BY
BOUNCIN' BEAU SMITH
ART BY
DERANGED DAN FRAGA
image
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22. *ALIEN TRILOGY,* which combines the blockbuster action from *Alien, Aliens* and *Alien 3*, allows players to assume the role of Ripley as they navigate through 18 levels of intense alien battles. Armed with an "auto-mapper" and array of special weapons, gamers encounter the most feared extraterrestrials in the galaxy, including face-huggers, chest-bursters, dog aliens and queen aliens. In addition, gamers must also contend with security guards and company soldiers, who are trying to smuggle aliens off of the doomed planet LV-426. Scheduled to debut later this year on PC CD-ROM, and afterwards on Sega Saturn and Sony's PSX, Alien Trilogy will incorporate Acclaim's advanced motion capture technology, offering 3-D realism and intense, life-like action.

23. OCEAN OF AMERICA BRINGS *LOBO*, DC'S KING BASTICH, to state-of-the-art gaming platforms. *Lobo* is currently in development for all the leading hardware platforms, including SNES, Sega Genesis, Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn and PC CD-ROM. The 16-bit versions of *Lobo* will be available in October 1995, with the PC CD-ROM and super console versions due out shortly after. "Ocean's state-of-the-art electronic animation technology brings *Lobo* to life," said Mark Rogers, software development manager for Ocean of America, Inc. "Each of the game's six core characters has been individually clay-modeled and digitized, producing true-to-life organic forms and high levels of detail." Lobo's honor has been betrayed and he's not happy. The futuristic bounty hunter is suddenly running into familiar faces on the street—the faces of criminals he eliminated long ago! For Lobo's arch-enemy, Vril Dox, killing Lobo is not enough. He must destroy his good name in the process, and he's doing so by bringing Lobo's "kills" back to life. In an effort to restore his good name (as well as his financial status), Lobo must combat this evil plot through any means possible, hoping to determine, once and for all, who the Main Man really is. Lobo takes on characters such as Robert D'Nirto, Shaola, Kris "Krusher" Kringle, Loo & Feeces, Vril Dox and a Lobo clone.

WHAT THE FRAG?!

24. LOOKING FOR A NEW ADVENTURE? YOU MAY FIND IT WITH *SKYBORG: INTO THE VORTEX*, the new CD-ROM adventure game from SkyBox, linked with the SkyBox Master Series: Creators Edition Trading Cards. The set includes 115 original paintings by the best artists in the world—Julie Bell, Brom, Dave Dorman, Dave McKean and Brian Stelfreeze—reproduced on the finest-quality card stock. For the first time, SkyBox has developed an innovative CD-ROM adventure game that puts cards in a whole new dimension, coming this fall.

25. *WATERWORLD,* one of this summer's most anticipated movies, is coming to the Sony PlayStation and 3DO, courtesy of Interplay in late 1995.

26. IN JUNE, ACTIVISION LAUNCHES *ATARI 2600 ACTION PACK 2,* the second title in a planned four-volume series. The compilation will feature such classic Atari 2600 games as *Barnstorming, Megamania, Keystone Kapers* and 12 others. All on PC CD-ROM for only $29.99.

27. ACTIVISION BRINGS OUT *PITFALL: THE MAYAN ADVENTURE* ON SEGA 32X IN SEPTEMBER. This was at the show, and it looked nothing short of spectacular.

28. VIRGIN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT HAS FORMED A JOINT VENTURE FOR THE RIGHTS TO THE SCI-FI MOVIE CLASSIC *BLADE RUNNER*. The joint venture will own exclusive worldwide rights to publish multimedia and interactive products based on one of the most sought-after sci-fi film licenses, *Blade Runner*. This title will be developed by Virgin's Westwood Studios for PC and MAC CD-ROM. *Blade Runner* is slated for a Fall 1996 release.

29. CAPCOM USA, INC. PREVIEWED *STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE* for the Sony PlayStation and Sega Saturn. *Street Fighter: The Movie*, with its state-of-the-art features, incorporates actual digitized images of nearly all the movie's cast members to provide an amazingly realistic fighting game experience. Expected for release in October of this year, the game will be one of the first titles available to support next generation systems, and is part of Capcom's killer, cutting-edge line-up of titles for the 32-bit market.

CHUN-LI WILL KICK BUTT!

30. THE *MUTANT CHRONICLES* lore, which originated in Scandinavia, has sprung across international borders. This Super Nintendo and Sega Genesis title from Playmates, scheduled for release in Fall 1995, will bring the popular collectible card game to life. The storyline is dark and grim: In its colonizing of the solar systems, mankind has awakened a race of utterly destructive and completely ravenous aliens known as the Dark Legion. Two Doomtroopers of the Brotherhood travel from planet to planet in an effort to save the human race. *Mutant Chronicles* fans have already made three Penguin Books titles quick sellers. A four-part comic book miniseries will be out soon, and a full-length motion picture from Edward Pressman Films (*The Crow*) is being planned for release next year.

31. *DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2: DIDDY'S KONG QUEST* is coming this fall from Nintendo of America Inc.and Rare, Ltd.—the team responsible for *Donkey Kong Country*. In this exciting 16-bit sequel, Diddy Kong teams up with a new, female sidekick, Dixie Kong, to take on the evil Kremlings who have "kong-napped" Donkey Kong. *Diddy's Kong Quest* will deliver spectacular animation, enhanced levels of game play and exploding colors, to make it one of the hottest video games in 1995.

32. VIRTUAL BOY is a RISC-based, 32-bit system which uses two high-resolution, mirror-scanning LED (light-emitting diode) displays to produce a 3-D experience not possible on conventional television or LCD screens. Its unique design eliminates all external stimuli, totally immersing players into their own private universe with high-resolution red images against a deep, black background. The 3-D experience is enhanced through stereophonic sound and a new, specially designed, double-grip controller which accommodates multi-directional spatial movements. *Virtual Boy* will be launched in the U.S. on August 14, 1995, for a suggested retail price of $179.95. Personally, I thought it looked and played somewhat poorly, in a primitive way. We'll see if it can handle the competition! ☆

VIRTUAL BOY IS HERE!

Steve Brown thinks the most kick-butt game at E^3 was the Can You Afford All These Freakin' Games? *game. He lost, though.*

The Movie Event of the Year in a Spooktacular Card Set from Fleer!
Creating an innovative blend of live-action and breath-taking visual effects Steven Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment, Universal Pictures and The Harvey Entertainment Company have pushed the boundaries of filmmaking to bring the magical characters of CASPER to life.
SOLD OUT!

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CONTEST

Event Comics and *Wizard* Present:

The Ash "Real-Life Hero" Contest

Wanna know just how cool Event Comics' Ash is? Well, we'll tell ya. He ain't just a hero when he's got his bad-guy-fightin' togs on. No siree, Bob. He's a genuine hero 24 hours a day, because he's a firefighter, too—one of the many real-life heroes who put their butts on the line every day for you and me.

Now you can get directly involved with comic heroes and real-life heroes at the same time, and maybe even walk away with some neat loot while you're at it.

Ash ™ & © Joe Quesada & Jimmy Palmiotti

This contest expires August 31, 1995, so don't be late!

HOW TO PLAY

All you've got to do is tell us who your personal real-life hero is and why, in 50 words or less. Is your hero a firefighter like Ash? A doctor who saved your life? That girlie in your fourth period algebra class who really blossomed over the summer? Tell us all about your real-life hero, and you could walk away with some...

This contest is sponsored by the folks at **EVENT COMICS**, a bunch of people who we think are real swell.

...Neat Prizes!

Grand Prize (1): One reader will receive a run of *Ash* #1-#4 autographed by creators Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada, and a **fully assembled and painted Ash resin model**, part of a limited edition of only 200 pieces!

Second Prize (5): Five readers will receive a limited-edition 19-by-23-inch Ash lithograph, signed and numbered by creators Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada. This baby is part of a limited edition of only 1,500!

Third Prize (10): Ten readers will receive a copy of the fun-filled *Ash* #1, autographed by creators Jimmy Palmiotti and Joe Quesada.

That's right. We said "autographed"!

See that official entry form below? Fill that sucker out, attach your write-up—typed or neatly handwritten—about your personal real-life hero, put it an envelope and send it to:

REAL LIFE HERO Contest
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

LEGAL STUFF THAT NONE OF YOU PEOPLE WOULD READ, EVEN IF WE PAID YOU TO DO SO

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Event Comics, their immediate families and The Artist Formerly Known As Prince. What the hell is your name now, you jackass? Like we can pronounce some damn symbol? We ought to give you a meaty purple fist right upside your head! Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5 inch index card and attach your real-life hero essay. Mail each entry separately to: Ash Real-Life Hero Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Enter as many times as you like. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out, if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Boy, my ankle hurts. I mean, it really does. Got any Tylenol? All entries must be received at contest headquarters by August 31, 1995. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on creativity and originality by Wizard Press. The judging will take place on September 15, 1995.

For a list of winners, available after September 15, 1995, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Ash Real-Life Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

ENTRIES DUE BY AUGUST 31, 1995!

OFFICIAL ASH REAL-LIFE HERO ENTRY FORM

NAME

HOME ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

PHONE DATE OF BIRTH

FAVORITE LUNCH MEAT CONDIMENT

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR WRITE-UP TO THIS FORM?

PALMER'S PICKS

Teenage Terror

If you remember going through all the painful and discomforting feelings of not fitting in that are associated with adolescence and high school, then you'll have no trouble relating to Charles Burns' *Black Hole*. In this new series by the acclaimed comics creator and illustrator, teenagers are subjected to a bizarre virus that manifests itself in horrific ways. Some teens are merely disfigured with bumps and rashes, while others find themselves transformed into horribly deformed monsters.

As Burns explains, the idea of a "teen plague" is an effective metaphor for the uncomfortable aspects of adolescence. "I'm taking this very volatile period in everybody's life when you're coming of age, when you're not quite a kid and not quite an adult; you're kind of in this limbo between the two. I'm just kind of thinking about that period of time, and throwing in a few more ideas on top of that, making it a little more physically or blatantly horrific. As if it wasn't already."

This disfiguring virus is something that Burns has touched on in previous stories, most notably "Contagious" (from Steve Bissette's *Taboo*) and "Teen Plague" (which saw print in *Raw*). With *Black Hole*, Burns hopes to nail down the horrific epidemic once and for all. "In the past, I've had certain stories or certain ideas that I find myself coming back to, and this is one I've touched on in different ways. I've done a couple of stories with it, but I never really felt fully satisfied as far as exploring the whole idea of this teen plague phenomenon. I still haven't gotten it out of my system, but this series will probably take care of it. Hopefully, I'll never have to do another story about it."

Black Hole isn't just about disgusting sores and blistering skin, though. Surprisingly, Burns also describes the story as a romance. "It's kind of focusing on a number of characters, two characters in particular, but there are also other incidental characters that will be explored. I'm finding that I need to explore some characters I thought were fairly incidental and fairly minor, but the focus is really on the one male character and one female character. When it comes right down to it, it's a horror-romance."

Black Hole promises to be the most rewarding and engrossing story of Charles Burns' career.

Charles Burns is one of the few comic creators qualified to pull off such a bizarre combination of genres. His work has appeared since the early '80s in comic magazines like *Heavy Metal*, *Raw*, *Buzz* and *Taboo*, as well as a weekly comic strip he drew for several years called "Big Baby." Burns is known not only as a comic book creator, but as a respected commercial artist. His inimitable line work has been printed in a variety of magazines all over the world from *Rolling Stone* to *Playboy*, and has even appeared on the cover of *Time*. His art has also graced cans of OK Cola and such album covers as Iggy Pop's *Brick By Brick*.

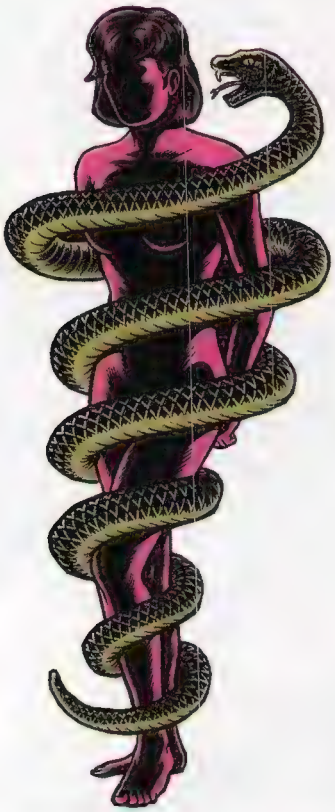
Despite these impressive credentials, *Black Hole* is the first ongoing comic series that Burns can call his own. "I've always loved comics and I've always tried to find different ways of making them and putting them out, but I've never really used the traditional comic book format as a venue for my work. I had a really long story in mind and it seemed like it would be appropriate to have it come out in serialized form, issue after issue, to complete a long complex story."

Drawing *Black Hole* has provided Burns with some new challenges. "It's kind of a liberating thing to work in a very self-contained magazine where I can really control the whole look of it. If you look at what I've done in the first issue, I've really been aware of page placement and how the comic book can be used as a whole to have fun with the pacing of the story by juxtaposing different pages and different panels. I've always worked with a very traditional three-tiered grid—which is really a good way to restrain yourself if you're trying to learn how to write—but I think I've done that to the point where I feel like stepping out and spreading out."

The open artwork and experimental storytelling in

***Black Hole* #1**

By Tom Palmer Jr.



TOP: I see a snake in your future...
ABOVE: Serpent girl

Black Hole definitely contrasts with the regimented layouts in Burns' earlier work. The most pronounced difference is with his weekly "Big Baby" comic strip. While it did not provide the freedom of experimentation that his new series allows, drawing the strip was definitely a unique experience. "It had its pros and cons. One thing that I really liked was the idea of reaching a different audience. At the time I was doing it, I was in a bunch of different papers in New York, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and a whole bunch of different cities. I liked the idea of having my work accessible to anyone who could pick up a free paper on the corner in the city."

Burns found, however, that despite its positive aspects, the comic strip had some limitations. "I was doing a continuing story and it wasn't really ideal for a weekly comic strip. The most successful weekly strips are just self-contained strips that come out each week, but I was trying to do a longer story and I was fitting the strips into that format. In a certain way, it was not the best outlet. I can't really imagine keeping up with the strip each week, but I've been told that some people did." To make things easier on readers, the stories that ran in the weekly strip were eventually collected in book form, including *Blood Club* (featuring "Big Baby") and *Skin Deep* (with the infamous story of Dog Boy).

Black Hole promises to be the most rewarding and engrossing story of Charles Burns' career. If the bold storytelling and painstakingly precise art of the first issue is any indication, this series is definitely something to watch out for. But don't wait until it's too late, because Burns says he has a definite ending for *Black Hole*. "It might take a long time to get there. It all seems like it's expanding in different areas as I write, but it's got a beginning, middle and end. It's not going to just float on forever." ☆

Tom Palmer Jr. is very close to running away from everything to become a hermit and live in the woods.

FYI

The first issue of *Black Hole* was released in March, and the second is tentatively scheduled for October. Kitchen Sink Press publishes this black-and-white series along with a number of other items for fans of Charles Burns, including T-shirts, cards and art prints. Write to them at 320 Riverside Drive, Northampton, MA 01060 or call 1-800-365-7465.

Charles Burns' Recommended Reading: When I asked Charles to rattle off some recent comics he liked, he gave a rather nonchalant response. "Five comics I want to plug? Oh boy. I'll call you back or something. I'll leave it on your answering machine, how's that? I'll think of something obscure, rather than the usual list of comics." I thought I'd have to make up the list myself, but Charles came through in the end with a pretty impressive bunch of comics: Paul Auster's *City of Glass* adapted by Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli from Avon Books; *Acme Novelty Library* (especially the issues featuring Jimmy Corrigan) by Chris Ware from Fantagraphics; *Drawn & Quarterly* edited by Chris Oliveros from Drawn & Quarterly Publications; *Self-Loathing Comics* by Robert Crumb and Aline Kominsky-Crumb from Fantagraphics; and Adrian Tomine's *Optic Nerve* from Drawn & Quarterly Publications.

Tom's Recommended Reading

You should be able to find all of these comics at any good comic store, but write to the publishers if you can't. Also, be on the lookout for new issues of *Taboo* and *Blab!* (two top-notch anthologies from Kitchen Sink), and *Comic-slit Magazine*, a new monthly anthology from NBM (185 Madison Ave., Ste. 1504, New York, NY 10016).

Ragmop: You're guaranteed to double over laughing at Rob Walton's dementedly inspired satire in *Ragmop*, his new self-published comic series. Nothing is held sacred, as Rob pokes fun at everything from republicans to superheroes. The pre-publication buzz around this comic is loud enough to blow your eardrums, so don't be left out! Write to Planet Lucy Press at 264 Bloor St. West, PO Box 52536, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5F 3C5.

Buzz Buzz Comics Magazine: If you missed out on *THB*, Paul Pope's fantastic breakthrough series, then the least you can do is pick up *Buzz Buzz*. This magazine combines new comics (including a team-up between Pope and Jay Stephens of *Atomic City Tales*) with other material, including a three-way interview with Stephen Bissette, Jeff Smith and Pope himself. You'll kick yourself (twice) if you miss this one! Write to Horse Press, PO Box 3112, Columbus, OH 43210.

BLACK HOLE and all characters shown ™ & © Charles Burns. RAGMOP ™ & © Rob Walton.

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

CBIQ

So you think ya know every stupid, useless comic fact there is, huh? Well, what follows are 25 of the hardest questions ever slapped together by a band of hornswaggled fanboys. (And the only thing worse than fanboys are *hornswaggled* fanboys. Trust us.)

This time around, we're grading you against the neatest things found in Batman's utility belt. The higher the score, the cooler the object.

score	rank
0-5	Wipes.
6-12	Robin nudie shots. (Which show why he's *really* called the Boy Wonder.)
13-19	The Bat-bazooka (which, in an old *Super Friends* episode, Batman pulled out from behind his back. Or out of his ass. Whichever's more believable.)
20-24	Squirrels.
25	That John Byrne art column we promised you a couple of months ago in *Wizard*.

1. What was the name of the device that cured the Vulture?
A) The Juvenator
B) The Clapper
C) The Super-Solder Serum
D) Aunt May's leather lovin'. Damn her and all she represents.

2. The Legionnaire named Triad is different from the old Legion's Triplicate Girl in that:
A) She has a deep loathing for Bouncing Boy.
B) She's six-and-a-half feet tall.
C) Her three separate bodies have different personalities.
D) She's the team leader.

3. Norrin Radd is better known as:
A) The Spectre.
B) The Silver Surfer.
C) The Spirit.
D) The Golden Age Sandman.

4. In Topps' awesome *Mars Attacks* mini-series, why couldn't those silly Martians understand what the Earthlings were doing?
A) The humans spoke in pig Latin
B) They're deaf
C) They only understood the language of love
D) They kept killing all the Earthlings they found

5. Suicide Squad supervisor Amanda Waller first appeared in:
A) *Deathstroke* #10.
B) *Suicide Squad* #3.
C) *Legends* #1.
D) *Big Black Feisty Women* #3.

6. Thor's hammer, the sacred Mjolnir, is forged from which mystic metal?
A) Adamantium
B) Adam Ant-ium
C) Uru
D) Kungfuru

7. Who is not a member of Vertigo's The Invisibles?
A) King Mob
B) Ninja-Bot
C) Ragged Robin
D) Jack Frost

8. Wolverine is so popular that:
A) He can pee wherever he wants.
B) He can squeeze your dog until its li'l puppy dog eyes pop out and it craps itself, and there's nothing you can do about it.
C) He can park the Blackbird in a handicapped space and knock over any guy in a wheelchair that gives him any lip.
D) He can—aw, the hell with this question. He's so friggin' popular he can do whatever he friggin' wants.

9. Cloak of *Cloak and Dagger* fame (snicker, snicker) was a promising high school athlete in what sport?
A) Table Tennis
B) Jai Alai
C) Mah-Jongg
D) Basketball

10. Why do Godzilla's spines glow when he exhales fire?
A) An allergic reaction
B) To give the optical FX people something to do
C) He generates radioactivity
D) A sign of rage

11. Elvis Presley's favorite superhero was:
A) Dr. Strange.
B) Captain Marvel Jr.
C) Flash.
D) Any superheroine under 14.

12. Who was the good Sleestak from the old *Land of the Lost* TV show?
A) Enik
B) Unic
C) Ezondi
D) Heck, the only good Sleestak is a dead Sleestak! Yeehaw, Billy-Bob. Lemme gets my rope and we'lls hang 'em!

13. When you think of Spider-Man, you think:
A) Is it him or a clone, or the clone's clone, or is he really Gwen Stacy's clone?

Background ™ & © their respective owners

B) Aunt May's really, really dead this time. So's Doc Ock.
C) I want more stories where Spidey goes mad and becomes a dark and gritty character waiting to pummel the heck out of the villain of the week.
D) Wow, Spidey used to be a fun character.

14. The coolest of the following *Star Wars* bounty hunters is:
A) Dengar.
B) IG-88.
C) Zuckuss.
D) Boba Fett. And yes, this is the right answer whether you like it or not.

15. Wolverine almost married:
A) Natasha Rominov.
B) Carol Danvers.
C) Mariko Yashida.
D) Yuriko Darkwind

16. Who was not a member of Alpha Flight?
A) Smart Alec
B) Diamond Lil
C) Marrina
D) Vindicator

17. John Byrne never drew:
A) *Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch.*
B) *The West Coast Avengers.*
C) *The Savage She-Hulk.*
D) *The Untold Legend of Batman.*

18. Who is Arthur?
A) The Avengers' courteous and faithful servant
B) The Tick's pudgy, yet loyal sidekick
C) That mutant-freak inventor who lives in the Batcave
D) A short, annoying, unfunny alcoholic who's constantly falling down and looks kinda like Dudley Moore who is also short, annoying and unfunny

19. Dr. Strange originally went to the Ancient One:
A) To see him do an Ancient Two (ba-da-bump!).
B) To cure him of nerve damage.
C) To learn the ways of the mystic arts.
D) For an ancient Chinese secret, eh?

20. This was not one of the ghosts in Pac-Man:
A) Inky.
B) Blinky.
C) Clyde.
D) Winky.

21. Which of the following characters is a *real* doctor?
A) Shaman
B) Agatha Harkness
C) Dr. Fate
D) Dr. Doom

22. In his true state, who does the Martian Manhunter most resemble?
A) Swamp Thing without the "swamp" part
B) Gumby
C) Ed McMahon
D) Freddie "Rerun" Stubbs from *What's Happening!!*

23. The Vision was created by:
A) Hank Pym.
B) Wonder Man.
C) Doctor Doom.
D) Ultron.

24. Flaming Carrot's speaker is located in his:
A) Chest.
B) Neck.
C) Car.
D) Butt, and boy, does he have bad breath.

25. What language do the Legion of Super-Heroes speak?
A) English
B) In tongues
C) Interlac
D) French. Speaking of which, thanks for folding like a house of cards in WWII you bunch of snail-eatin', beret-wearin' frogs. Up yours, Frenchie! ☆

ALPHA FLIGHT & CAPTAIN AMERICA ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. GREEN LANTERN ™ & © DC Comics. GODZILLA ™ & © Toho Co. Ltd.

MISSING LINK

WIN!

Captain America #110!

The first appearance of Rick Jones as Bucky!

Each month, we list three comic book issues that contain something in common: in content, characters, creators or the like. Your job is to tell us what that something is.

For example, what do *Uncanny X-Men* #144, *Marvel Team-Up* #122 and *She-Hulk* (vol. 2) #8 all have in common? That's easy: all three feature guest appearances by the Man-Thing.

Get the idea? We'll randomly select an entry out of all the correct ones we receive. The winner of this month's contest will receive a copy of *Captain America* #110! So good luck, and good sleuthing! (And remember—you need to *read* the three books!)

Here are this month's batch o' books:

Alpha Flight #10

Godzilla #17

Green Lantern (vol. 2) #87

Send all entries to:
Missing Link #48
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
***Hurry!* All entries must be received by September 29, 1995!**

CONGRATULATIONS to Cristina Mezuk, from Rockford, MI, the winner of issue #43's Missing Link! She actually read the three issues—*Darkstars* #23, *She-Hulk* #59 and *Uncanny X-Men* #315—and figured out that they all featured a trial! Good goin', Cristina!

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families and whoever's responsible for the next *Gump* spinoff book. We all loved the flick, but enough's enough. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code and the Missing Link on a three-by-five-inch index card or a standard postcard. Mail each entry to Missing Link #48, c/o Wizard Press, Congers, NY 10920-2064. Enter as many times as you like. Limit one entry per envelope. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become the property of Wizard Press, and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize is offered. The prize will be awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof. We're not gonna take it. No, we ain't gonna take it. We're not gonna take it...anymore. All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 29, 1995. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winner will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on October 2, 1995, by Wizard Press. All decisions are final.

For the winner's name, available after October 20, 1995, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Missing Link #48 Winner, c/o Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064, or just watch this column!

ANSWERS

1.A	2.C	3.B	4.A	5.C	6.C	7.B	8.D	9.D
10.C	11.B	12.A	13.D	14.D	15.C	16.A	17.C	18.B
19.B	20.D	21.A	22.B	23.D	24.A	25.C		

by Lea Hernandez

anime and manga myths debunked

It's time to address many of the myths that currently surround anime and manga. These include:

1) Anime and manga **all look the same**.

2) Anime is **all sick sex**.

3) Anime is **all violent**.

4) Anime and manga are **all originally brain-blastingly brilliant, but are always translated into crap**.

5) Japanese animation and comics **aren't protected by American copyright laws**.

It's no myth that some manga, like *Ghost in the Shell*, has its share of violence.

they all look the same

The first myth is pretty harmless, a common mistake made by new anime-manga readers. The truth is, it *can* all look a great deal alike.

As in American comics, certain styles become popular—almost to the point of becoming indistinct from artist to artist—but each artist does have a personal "lick" that distinguishes his or her style from others. The same is true in Japan. An even slightly seasoned reader of manga is going to know the difference between *Ghost in the Shell* and *Gunsmith Cats*, even though they are both action-based comics with female leads.

sick sex and violence

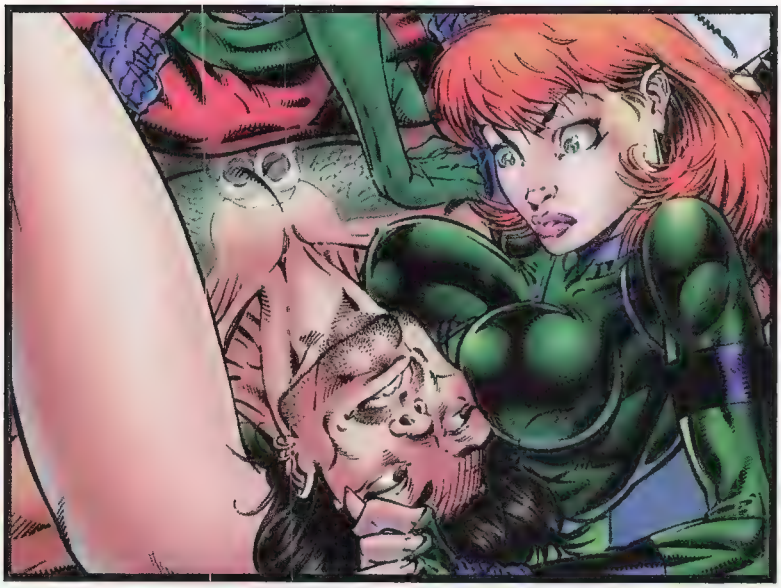
The second two are oft-repeated lines from reports on anime in newspapers and magazines, such as the *L.A. Times* and *TV Guide*. They are harmful in that they characterize Japanese culture as permissive and its pop culture as depraved. Even though these facts are inaccurate, they have been repeated so many times in poorly reported and researched articles, that people who know nothing else about anime think it's all sex and violence. The "adult" myth is so pervasive that a recent article in a media magazine made the completely erroneous claim that Hayao Miyazaki's eco-fable *Nausicaä* was cut for the American market to remove its "adult scenes." (What was cut was an *extensive* sub-plot that expanded on the heroine's motivation, not her sexual habits.)

It's funny that a culture with so much violence in its own entertainment worries about what's coming from overseas. Part of the problem is that Americans still think of animation as children's fare.

Having seen *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Animaniacs* and Disney animated musicals from *The Little Mermaid* on, I'm not sure why people think so.

One of the most interesting examples of this confusion (and the perpetuation of the violence and sex myth) was in a *TV Guide* Sci-Fi/Fantasy column from earlier this year. In a sidebar about the upcoming, made-for-video animated Gen^{13}, the writer noted that it would be directed by *Batman: The Animated Series'* Kevin Altieri (who seemed to be looking forward to not having to please a network with programming content), but noted: "Don't expect the sick sex" of anime. While *Gen^{13}* has never featured sick sex, it's certainly not without its share of exploitation shots (the cover that featured Fairchild's breasts draped over someone else's head springs readily to mind). One wonders how much anime the writer had actually seen, what he had seen and if he'd ever seen *Gen^{13}* at all.

GHOST IN THE SHELL ™ & © 1995 Masamune Shirow and Kodansha Ltd. All rights reserved. English translation © 1995 Studio Proteus and Dark Horse.



Grunge from WildStorm's *Gen*[13] gets an eyeful. .er, a faceful!

None of this is to say that there isn't anime out there with adult content. There is. But it by no means comprises a majority of what is imported; it's simply the most notorious.

crappy translations

As for anime translations, while it's true that some very good anime has been translated very badly, most of the current material available is translated competently (even if it's dubbed in a very uninspired way). There are fans of anime and manga (anime in particular), that seem to attribute much more wit, insight and depth to the material than it actually has. In truth, we see only a thin slice of the material, and that slice is mostly the best. Lucky us.

Crummy translations and edits to please the sensibilities of the artistically void are pretty much a thing of the past. Most translated material goes straight to video, which means it doesn't have to pass network standards for content. In other words, it's not "dumbed-down" for the imagined, single-digit IQ of the average watcher. Many of the people currently packaging anime for the American market were anime fans to begin with, and have a healthy respect for the original material.

This wasn't always true, of course. Anyone about 30 years old remembers the ultra-bad *Battle of the Planets* (currently incarnated as the ultra-bad *G-Force*), a sorry dub of the fairly good action series *Gatchaman*. Or *Warriors of the Wind*, which seems OK until viewing the original, *Nausicaä*, and seeing how much content was stripped from it.

As for how good anime and manga may have been to begin with, the best thing to say (to avoid hurting anyone's feelings) is that it can't *all* be brain surgery. There's nothing wrong with a little bubble gum.

Protection?

The last myth is harmful in a material way: not only are anime and manga protected under American copyright laws, but fans are missing out because unauthorized duplicates of videos and translations can kill the market for licensed versions of even the most popular material. Anyone who doubts that American copyright laws protect Japanese material should remember that about 10 years ago, Viz Comics prevented Angel Comics from publishing an unauthorized translation of *Fist of the Northstar*.

There used to be boatloads of pirated anime merchandise available at any convention in the U.S.—pins, T-shirts, videos, you name it. Color copiers have taken pirated videos a long way from the days of black copies on colored paper in black clamshell cases, but it's still possible to tell the real deal from the fake. A very low price on an untranslated import is one. Close inspection of the art is another. Copied art will have minute horizontal lines or spotty areas in the art. Imports will sport a foil or holographic sticker. A shrink-wrapped package is no proof that an import is legit—piraters have shrink-wrapping, too. Neither is buying something at a con with a no-piracy policy. My husband bought a pirated tape at an anime convention last year, assuming the con's policy ensured that all products were legal. (The dealer in question kept the originals *on* his table, and handed customers tapes from *under* the table.)

Of course, there's still the electronic frontier: unauthorized fan translations and scans of copyrighted artwork are found anywhere where computer services are available. This, like copying tapes, is a holdover from the days of anime-manga fandom, where fan translations really were the only way to understand what was going on. There are many fans who have become accustomed to getting something for (almost) nothing. It's such a close-minded way of thinking, that a fan at a convention actually suggested to Studio Proteus' Toren Smith that manga should be translated by pros and given to the fans for free.

But if fans actually believe that the distribution of translations isn't harmful to the market, they should consider this: the

Fist of the Northstar

GEN[13] ™ & © 1995 Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions. FIST OF THE NORTHSTAR ™ & © 1995 Toei Animation Co. Ltd.

So you think Minnie and Rally of *Gunsmith Cats* look like every manga character? Well, yeah, they kind of do.

American comic book translation of *Oh My Goddess!* was cut in pieces from several volumes, not just to follow the continuity of the animated series, but also because Toren Smith strongly felt that fan translations of the early volumes were so widely distributed to potential buyers, that there was no point in spending the money in translating the material again. There's no doubt that similar decisions will be made with other series in the future.

It's difficult for companies to prosecute or protect themselves from this sort of theft, mainly because "cyberspace" is an area still undergoing legal definition.

As for busting the myths, the average fan can always write letters to publications that print articles sensationalizing the violence/sex angle or misrepresenting anime and manga entirely. Calm, rational discussion is always best. Passing up pirated videos (which gets easier and easier as the market expands and videos get cheaper) will help. As for the myth that anime and manga are translated into material only fit to line bird cages, well...I still haven't found a way to change someone's mind about that. If anyone out there has, please let me know.

Until next time.

Thanks to all the *Wizard* Manga Scene readers who e-mailed me their thoughts. Keep the e-mail coming to akiyama@cris.com. ☆

Lea Hernandez has lettered and retouched manga for 10 years and serves as moderator of Japanese animation and manga for the online service GEnie.

picks of the month

video:

Giant Robo (episodes 1 & 2 on one tape)
(Manga Entertainment, $19.95)

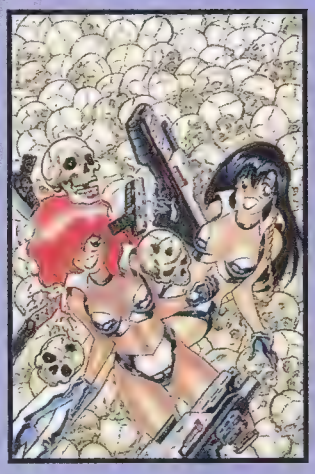
Giant Robo is one of the best "retro" animes, hearkening back to *Gigantor* and *Speed Racer*. It's got a team of diverse characters, including a gorgeous woman, a young boy (Giant Robo's pilot, of course), some rather unusual martial artists, mad scientists, an evil brother and a giant robot. It's got (in just the first episode) a train chase *and* a car chase. It's got the definitive redefinition of the '60s style in Japanese animation. It's got a power source that may or may not be good. Basically, it's got everything for an epic struggle between good and evil.

Despite the physics-defying Giant Robo, this really is a surprisingly moody and effective anime.

I *dare* you not to shiver when the lights go out in Paris...

manga:

Dirty Pair: Fatal But Not Serious
(Dark Horse Comics/Studio Proteus, color, $2.95)



It had to happen sooner or later: writer-artist Adam Warren's keen eye for irony and years of sitting behind a table at comic/anime conventions—where he drew Kei and Yuri as elfin princesses and watched talk shows between appearances—eventually mutated into something. In this case, it's the five-issue mini-series, *Fatal But Not Serious* (starting this July), in which Kei and Yuri are guests at a convention dedicated to one horrifying thing: the iconization of the Lovely Angels themselves.

In his own words, Warren says of the new series:

"I must warn all of you that *Fatal* is a very dangerous mini-series. It will turn your hair white, induce cerebral hemorrhaging and trigger a nasty repetitive stress injury. At least, that's what writing and drawing it did to me...."

GUNSMITH CATS ™ & © Kenichi Sonada and Kodansha Ltd. All rights reserved. English translation © 1995 Studio Proteus and Dark Horse Comics. GIANT ROBO ™ & © 1995 Manga Entertainment, Inc. DIRTY PAIR ™ & © 1995 Hideyuki Takatsuka and Adam Warren

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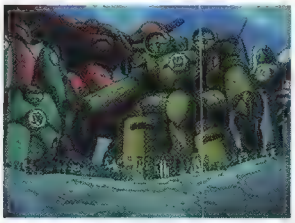
ARMITAGE III

The year is 2046. The place is Mars — A world where people live among highly developed humanoid robots. And when there's trouble, the Martian PD calls out Ross Sylibus, a recently transferred button down cop from Chicago and his new partner, ARMITAGE, the irreverent 19-year-old Martian born detective with a shocking attitude, a shocking wardrobe and a shocking secret.

This mature series delivers a sophisticated plotline as "Blade Runner" meets "Total Recall" in this gritty New Wave sci-fi thriller where robots have emotions and nothing is like it appears. You'll agree that Armitage is the sexiest 'toon to ever pack a piece.



KISHIN CORPS

If you're into Robots, this Retro-Sci-Fi series is what you've been waiting for!

In 1941, a Manchurian train is boarded by the evil Kanto Army searching for Dr. Takamura's black box module, but his young son, Taishi, escapes with it as mysterious Aliens descend from the sky, killing everything in their path. Just when Taishi is to save the day–this is Kishin Corps!

The secret battle lines are drawn between the Kanto Army, The Aliens and the Nazis. Kishin Corps is the Earth's only hope. And this is just the beginning!

The series has four volumes of the coolest in 1940s Retro-Robot Combat!

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Interested? Want to know more? Cut out this form and mail it in for your free issue of the "PAC America Newsletter." You'll be up to date on the up-to-the-minute happenings on the Anime scene.

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Anime-10
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PIONEER
The Art of Entertainment

the WIZARD OF CARDS

FLEER

OverPower is coming.

Marvel OverPower—Fleer's first entry into the collectible card game market—is getting closer and closer to its August release date.

Based on the Marvel Universe, *OverPower* represents one of Fleer's biggest releases of 1995, along with the second X-Men series. Attempting to tap into the excitement created by *Magic: The Gathering*, Fleer has high expectations for *OverPower*.

Let the Games Begin

"A lot of people are looking for a good superhero card game," said Fleer representative Steve Domzalski. "This [has] everybody's favorite heroes. This will fill a niche."

Each of the six different, pre-set starter decks consists of everything a player needs to play. Booster packs give players access to more heroes, villains and special cards to enhance playing. With more than 300 cards available, players can customize decks to feature their favorite—or most hated—Marvel characters.

A starter deck consists of 55 playing cards, which include Heroes, Specials, Powers and Universe cards. Nine "Mission" cards convey a complete Marvel adventure. Suggested retail price for a starter deck is $5.95.

Booster packs each consist of eight playing cards and one collectable "Mission" card. Booster packs; sporting a suggested retail price of $1.49, provide access to 21 Heroes, Special, Universe and Power cards not available in starter decks.

• Meanwhile, Fleer is expecting *Waterworld* to make a big splash in July with the premiere of the Kevin Costner-starring film. The film focuses on "residents" of an all-water future Earth searching for dry land, and stars Costner, Jeanne Tripplehorn and Dennis Hopper.

The 150-card set focuses on the action theme of the film. Subsets include character cards, movie cards featuring film scenes, a gadgetry subset and a high-tech set, taking a behind-the-scenes look at the film's special effects.

Chase cards include six Double-Foil cards, six Prismatic Foil cards and six Hologram cards. Each eight-card pack—with all cards UV-coated and gold foil-stamped—carries a suggested retail price of $1.49.

SKYBOX

First came *The Lion King*. Now comes *Pocahontas*.

On the heels of Disney's smash hit *The Lion King*, SkyBox is hoping to capitalize on the anticipated success of the newest Disney film, *Pocahontas*, coming in June.

A 90-card set will be released at the same time of the film. It will include 54 cards based on the film, a nine-card puzzle subset, a nine-card War Drums subset featuring action scenes from the film and a 12-card subset introducing the movie's characters—including Pocahontas, Capt. John Smith, John Ratcliffe, Chief Powhatan, the wise Grandmother Willow and forest friends Flit and Meeko.

"We hope to duplicate or exceed the success of *The Lion King* with *Pocahontas*," said SkyBox's George White. "We're seeking to capture the quality and entertainment of the movie with the card set."

Bonus cards include 3-D Panorama cards (one in nine), metallic foil-embossed cards (1:36) and the rarest bonus—two Moving Animation cards or "Animotion cards" (1:90), each showing 12 images when slowly moved. Individual packs have a suggested retail price of $1.19.

A special 50-card Collector's Set of oversized Pocahontas cards will also be created, featuring foil-stamping on front and back.

• Original art by Rob Liefeld can be seen in a card series for the first time, and SkyBox has got it.

Hitting stores in May, the 90-card Youngblood set marks the first SkyBox series to be printed on a thicker, 24-point paper stock.

Each card contains two pieces of original art—one piece on the front of the card, and one on the back. Bonus cards feature Kodiak, Die Hard, Badrock, Riptide and Shaft. A Badrock SkyDisc card is inserted in every 72 packs. Each eight-card pack carries a suggested retail price of $3.99.

Other potential bonuses include Youngblood stickers, merchandise cards, instant win cards and a chance for you and a friend to win a day at Extreme Studios with Rob Liefeld.

• A Prophet card set is headed your way in October. The 90-card set will be comprised of original art, half by popular Prophet artist Stephen Platt and the remainder by well-known comic artists including Greg Capullo and Sam Kieth.

• SkyBox will make its first foray into the CD-ROM Game Market

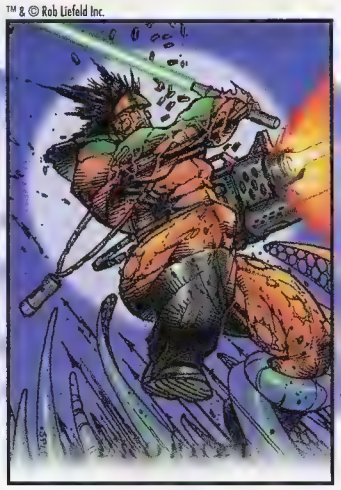
™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Overpower cards are coming!

™ & © Universal City

Fleer's *Waterworld* set, coming in July.

™ & © Rob Liefeld Inc.



SkyBox gives Prophet his own card set this October.

later this year. The plan is to release the SkyBox Master Series: Creators Edition Trading Card set in September, featuring 105 original characters in original paintings by Julie Bell, Brom, Dave Dorman, Dave McKean and Brian Stelfreeze. After the set is released, SkyBox will follow in October with a CD-ROM Game based on the original characters from the card set.

COMIC IMAGES

• Comic Images turns to acclaimed artist Joseph Michael Linsner for a sexy card series: Joseph Michael Linsner: Dawn & Beyond Collector Cards, featuring a selection of Linsner's portfolio art. The first-ever card series to spotlight Linsner's work, including a comprehensive representation of his *Cry for Dawn* series, will be released in July.

The release will coincide with the publication of Linsner's book, *Dawn* #1 from Sirius Comics, which returns the Dawn character to the comic world. "The timing with [the card series] is crucial for fans being exposed to my work for the first time," said Linsner, explaining that clues to unlocking the Dawn saga will be hidden within the card series.

The set features 10 cards per pack, carrying a suggested retail price of 79-99 cents per pack. Bonus cards include six Chromium cards, 500 specially designed cards autographed by Linsner, a three-card "Dawn" subset and a limited-edition Medallion card.

• The Conan saga continues with Conan III All-Chromium Collector Cards in July from Comic Images. The third series is a 90-card set featuring full-color paintings by comics and fantasy artists such as Boris Vallejo, Joe Jusko, Joe Chiodo, Neal Adams, Sal Buscema and Mike Kaluta.

"Conan represents, for us, the best of both worlds: we're able to present—in one series of cards—a blend of comic and fantasy art."

Available in seven-card packs with a suggested retail price of $1.89-$2.29, this set's bonus inserts include six MagnaChrome chase cards, a three-card MagnaChrome subset and a limited-edition Medallion Card.

• Bill Tucci's Shi debuts in August with the Shi All-Chromium Collector Cards, capturing the action of the first five well-received issues of the comic. Tucci has also created nine never-before-seen pieces for the set.

With a suggested retail price of $1.75-$2, each pack will feature seven cards. Bonus inserts include six MagnaChrome cards, 500 autographed cards, and one of those spiffy limited-edition Medallion Cards.

ORION TRADING CARD COMPANY

A fairly new card manufacturer is making news with its various sets of the first black-and-white portfolio-style trading cards ever, spotlighting original work by popular artists, in B & W format only, and with no retouching whatsoever. The latest such set—and Orion's main one for 1995—is called The Inkmaster Collection, which is a multi-part set composed of several individual releases. The next individual set available will be by popular fantasy artist Rick Arthur, and includes two parts itself: the 12-card Comic Book version (Part A, numbered #1-#12), available in mid-July, and the Adult version (Part B, numbered #13-#24, for collectors age 18 and over), available in late September. For both Part A and Part B, there will be a signed edition (limited to 2,000, with a checklist signed by Arthur, visible through the clear plastic, gold-sealed case each set comes in) for $9.95, and a numbered version (also limited to 2,000, with a similarly visible checklist numbered as one of 2,000) for $6.95. Meanwhile, the signed version and numbered version each have their own specific four-card chase subset (called Star Chasers, and sold separately for $5.00 each), which offer cards with two striking pictures selected from their respective 12-card set, on the front and back of each card. To order the Rick Arthur set (or any Inkmaster Collection Set), please contact publisher Mike Bradley, c/o Orion Trading Card Company, 100 Atwater Street, West Haven, CT 06516, or at (203) 937-9381.

WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS

WildStorm Productions enters the collectible game field with *WildStorms: The Expandable Super-Hero Game*, due in August.

All of WildStorm's characters from such books as *Gen*^{13}, *WildC.A.T.s*, *WetWorks*, *StormWatch*, *Deathblow*, *Union*, *Backlash* and *Team 7* will be featured in the game. There will also be special guest appearances by a number of non-WildStorm characters. Art will be provided by the WildStorm art team.

Starter decks—with a suggested price of $7.95 each—include 60 cards, with approximately 45 common cards and three levels of less common cards. The total set consists of 315 cards, with more added as expansion decks are issued.

• WildStorm Archives will be shipping in July, a card series featuring classic cover art from WildStorm's range of titles. The 99-card all-chromium set reproduces covers from all eight titles listed above. Artists include Jim Lee, J. Scott Campbell, Travis Charest, Whilce Portacio, Scott Clark, Aron Wiesenfeld and others.

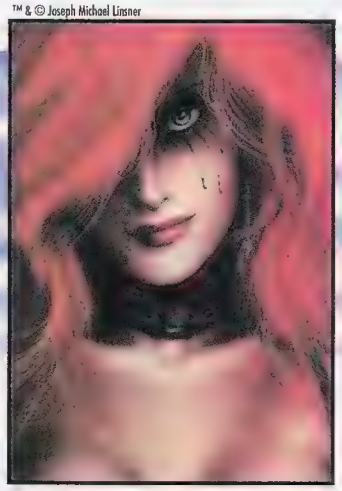
The chase set is made up of an 11-card refractive holofoil set of the hot *Gen*^{13} #1 variant covers—another cool keepsake from WildStorm!

All of this info was chased down by a few of Wizard *staffers and a chipmunk.*

™ & © Dave Dorman

One of *SkyBox*'s Creators Edition cards.

™ & © Joseph Michael Linsner



Dawn stars in Joseph Michael Linsner's first card collection.

™ & © Rick Arthur

From Orion's Inkmaster Collection, in the Rick Arthur set.

SkyBox™

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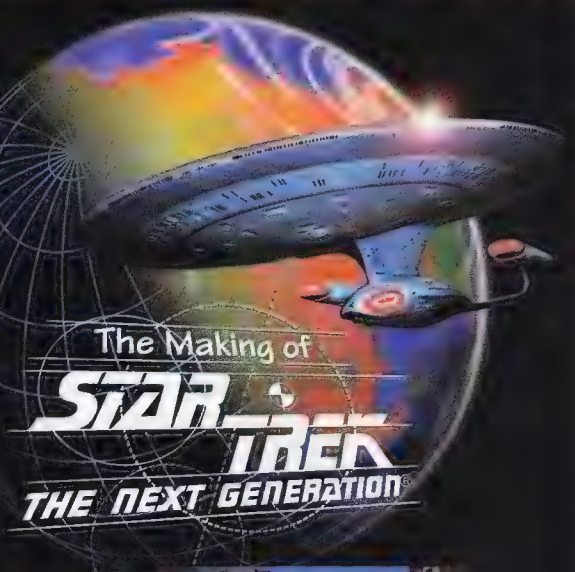

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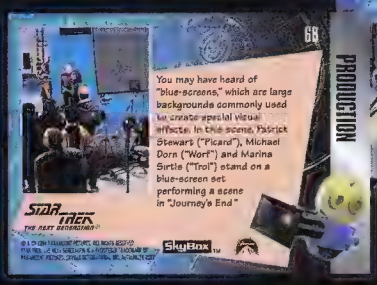

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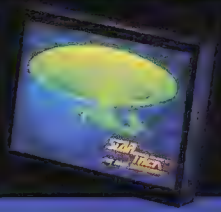

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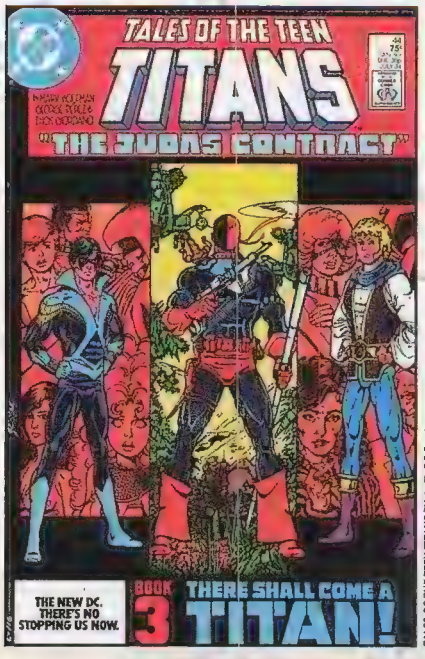


TALES OF THE TEEN TITANS™ & © DC Comics

Tales of the Teen Titans #44

Writer: ***Marv Wolfman***
Artists: ***George Pérez, Dick Giordano and Mike DeCarlo***
Publisher: ***DC Comics***
Release date: ***July 1984***

With all the big happenings centering around Dick Grayson these days, it stands to reason that his first appearance as Nightwing would be a pretty big friggin' deal. After all, since his departure from the Titans awhile back, Dick's been hangin' around the Batcave stirring things up. Why, he's helped out the new Robin, became Batman for a couple of months, coaxed Alfred into returning as Bruce Wayne's ever-so-trusty butler, and now he's finally getting that much-anticipated mini-series in July.

And, hell—Grayson's been popular ever since he donned that infamous Nightwing zoot suit in the momentous *Tales of the Teen Titans* #44. That ish was part three in the award-winning four-part "Judas Contract" story where—among other things—Deathstroke kicked major ass (i.e., he beat the pants offa alla them Titans, except Grayson, who was the only one to escape), Jericho debuted and the original Terra bit the big burrito. In this particular issue, you're told the true origin of Deathstroke (hey, he was one of the best *bad guys* roaming the DC Universe at the time). And "The Judas Contract" is arguably considered the greatest Titans story ever told, done by the definitive Titans team: Wolfman and Pérez.

The collectibility of this book is staggering, and it's pretty darn cheap right now. So get off yer duff and check it out before you can't even *find* a copy. ☆

good & cheap

by Mike Searle

MARVEL FANFARE™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

Marvel Fanfare #18

Writer: ***Roger Stern***
Artists: ***Frank Miller and Joe Rubinstein***
Current Value: ***$2.50***

What makes this one a winner? Besides 32 pages of non-stop, no-ad action, cool front *and* back covers by Frank Miller, and a host of bonus pinups by Kevin Nowlan and Terry Austin, you have to ask? Well, based on the creative team alone, file *Marvel Fanfare* #18 under "keeper."

But there's a reason these guys are this good. Miller's pencils remain fast-paced and poignant throughout, mixing a number of really cool fight scenes (hey, any time Cap takes out a villain with a ricocheting shield *and* gets nailed in the face with a broom, it's thumbs up in my book!) with the down-to-earth, hard-luck feel of life in the streets of Brooklyn.

Stern's story is first rate. This is not your usual slugfest or your time-to-save-the-world-and-mess-up-the-mad-villain-but-good storyline; this is about a superhero fighting in a real world. It's Cap fighting real people. Not some super-powered terrorist, but someone's dad. It's about terrorism in your backyard. It's about misplaced passion, hate and tragedy.

And if that's not enough, then it's also about ideals, faith and honor. If the scene at the end doesn't fill you with pride and hope, then you'd better check where your heart lies. ☆

PICKS
FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

HERE'S A LISTING OF THE HOTTEST BOOKS, AS SELECTED BY THE *WIZARD* STAFF, SHIPPING IN JULY!

Wonder Woman #101

Writer: *John Byrne*
Artist: *John Byrne*
Release Date: *Joh—uh, July 11*
Cover Price: *$1.95*

DC COMICS "It's funny," John Byrne says, "but whenever I talk about my [upcoming] issues of *Wonder Woman*, I always seem to drop off the first two digits." That's probably because, following the cataclysmic events of issue #100, Byrne takes the series in a new direction, giving Princess Diana a new cast, a revamped costume and a new attitude.

"My slightly pretentious title for the first arc is 'Second Genesis,'" he says. "It's about her cutting the umbilical cord to Paradise Island." So is Byrne jettisoning the mythological aspects that some fans enjoy? "I touch on the mythology, but it's not nearly as important to my version," he says. "Mine has more traditional superhero stuff, more punching and hitting. The character has never really had that, and I want to infuse a big chunk of that into her."

Diana also will have a new perspective, Byrne notes. "She's savvy and sort of hip and more wry than she has been. She's very comfortable with what she is." And what is she, exactly? "She's tougher, stronger, faster and prettier than anybody else. Wonder Woman should be the hottest babe on the block, but a babe with brains."

The blocks in question are located in Gateway City, Byrne's newly created, somewhat-sleazier version of San Francisco. There, she'll be running into such familiar faces as Superman, Darkseid, the Demon, Arion the Immortal and possibly even Batman. She'll also gain new supporting players, including a new boyfriend. "He'll be a young Jewish cop, so we can play some games with different religions."

So, will Wonder Woman be a babe book for guys or a "girl" book for female readers? "I'm hoping that if I do my job right, males will find it appealing and females will find it appealing, and probably for very different reasons." —Craig Shutt

WONDER WOMAN™ & © DC Comics

Nightwing #1

NIGHTWING™ & © DC Comics

Writer: ***Dennis O'Neil***
Artists: ***Greg Land & Mike Sellers***
Release Date: ***July 25***
Cover Price: ***$2.25***

DC COMICS This four-issue mini-series opens on a bummer: "Nightwing decides to give up his superhero gig," says writer Dennis O'Neil. "He's resentful that he was shanghaied into doing it, even though it was a great deal of fun. But now he's 23 and it's time for him to get on with his life."

But while packing things up, Alfred discovers something startling: a clue that Dick Grayson's parents weren't killed by the man who was believed to have done it. "That forces Nightwing back into the superhero racket," O'Neil says. "He figures he's going to have to break a lot of laws to track this down." Before he does, though, he has everyone's favorite Bat-costumer, Harold, give him a new look.

"This is a very interesting project for me, because it's the first time I've ever practiced what I've preached," O'Neil says. "I've structured it with two parallel subplots on the themes of family and family betrayal." Since the series introduces a new love interest for Nightwing, we'll have to wait and see which of those two themes actually involves her. Batman and Oracle also guest-star.

Are there more plans for Batman's former sidekick? "We'd like to have an ongoing series happen," O'Neil admits. "If this incarnation of Nightwing is favorably received, then a monthly book certainly is a possibility." —CS

Star Wars: X—Wing-Rogue Squadron #1

Writers: ***Mike Stackpole & Mike Baron***
Artists: ***Allen Nunis & Andy Mushynsky***
Release Date: ***July 11***
Cover Price: ***$2.95***

DARK HORSE This ongoing *Star Wars* title features every fan's favorite regular guy, Captain Wedge Antilles. The only X-Wing pilot to survive attacks on both Death Stars—and one of the few supporting characters to appear in all three movies—Wedge gets by on his wits and skills alone. "A Cult of Wedge definitely has developed among *Star Wars* fans," says editor Ryder Windham.

The first three four-issue arcs will be plotted by Mike Stackpole, who is currently writing a series of *X-Wing* novels for Bantam Books, scheduled to begin in spring 1996. Some of the events alluded to in those novels will first play out in the comics, Windham reveals. "The comics give Mike an excellent way to show details he could only touch on in the novels." The comic, scripted by Mike Baron, will be set about one year after the *Return of the Jedi* movie, while the novels will be set two years later.

The first story arc involves a rescue mission to the planet Mrisst, where the squadron finds Imperial fighters waiting in ambush. "There's a bit of a whodunit to the story, to determine how the enemy knew of the squadron's trip and whether the tip came from within their midst," Windham says. "But it's also got a lot of swooping dogfights." —CS

STAR WARS: X-WING—ROGUE SQUADRON™ & © Lucasfilm Ltd.

Team One: WildC.A.T.s #1

TEAM ONE: WILDC.A.T.S #1 ™ & © Aegis Entertainment Inc. DBA WildStorm Productions

Writer: ***James Robinson***
Artist: ***Rich Johnson***
Release Date: ***July 4*** ***(good luck finding a store that's open)***
Cover Price: ***$2.50***

IMAGE This two-parter links with another, *Team 1: StormWatch* by writer Steven T. Seagle, penciler Tom Raney and inker Hilary Barta. The books alternate every two weeks in July and August. "They tell the story from the two teams' different vantage points," explains Jeff Mariotte, marketing director. "It was a tricky collaboration for James and Steven."

The catalyst comes when military officials discover an alien presence (could it be—Daemonites?) tapping into American technological secrets. Saul Baxter vows to reveal that presence and creates Team One. Their members will have a major impact on today's teams, writer James Robinson reveals.

"Lucy Blaize is a cross between Diana Prince and Emma Peel [of the *Avengers* TV show]," he says. "She'll definitely provide links to present-day continuity." The same holds true for John Colt, who Robinson describes as "the ultimate American hero of the 1960s." His activities in that decade will dramatically affect the 1995 teams.

Robinson's story flows into another monthly three-parter he's writing for this fall, designated "WildC.A.T.s Minus 30 Years." A similar StormWatch three-parter by Seagle and Raney will appear simultaneously. And it all begins here. "I'm planting seeds and revealing stuff that will directly affect the present-day teams," says Robinson. "It's going to be cool for readers of both current teams." —CS

Lady Rawhide #1

Writer: ***Dan McGregor***
Artists: ***Mike Mayhew & Jimmy Palmiotti***
Release Date: ***July 11***
Cover Price: ***$2.95***

TOPPS COMICS What would the Picks be without a prominently featured Bad Girl? This month, Lady Rawhide busts loose, in a manner of speaking. "This is her first solo adventure," says Charlie Novinskie, sales and promotion manager for Topps Comics. "It gives her a chance to really shine, away from Zorro and the other characters."

The tale takes place in early 19th-century San Francisco, where our lovely Lady has come seeking medicine for her brother. She winds up having to track down a bloodthirsty nightstalker who is killing women and leaving an innocent man accused of the crimes. Using only her wits and physical skills (well, OK, and a whip and a sword), Lady Rawhide must stop a lynch mob and bring the real killer to justice before it's too late.

"We're excited about the series, because it obviously ties in with all the other Bad Girl titles," says Novinskie. "But also because letter writers have indicated that they want to see more of Lady Rawhide." While it may be asking too much of her costume designers to show more of her, she'll certainly be the focus of this five-part mini-series. And in case you somehow missed it (yeah, right), this issue of *Wizard* features a *Lady Rawhide* mini-comic, drawn by the inestimable Esteban Maroto! —CS

LADY RAWHIDE ™ & © Zorro Productions

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in July, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff. Books marked with a check ✓ sign are comics that should not be overlooked on the often-stuffed comic shelf.

Agents of Law #5

DARK HORSE Judge Dredd heads to Golden City and beats the piss out of Law, then heads for the hookers to blow some of the cash he made off of this summer's movie. But seriously, in a quest for more power, Law gets some high-tech thingiemabob that gives him more control. Also, a hooded figure claiming to be Golden City's former ruler is snooping around town. Hopefully, this skulker'll "grace" us with his or her presence. By Keith Giffen, Lovern Kindzierski, Dan Lawlis and Ian Akin. **$2.50**

Aquaman #12

DC COMICS Guess who's coming to dinner? Well, now that Mera's swum in on Aquaman while he and Dolphin were bumpin' fins, it's Aquaman's turn to be shocked. After Dolphin and Mera finish their little catfishfight, Fish Boy's ex-wife tells him of her other-worldly husband and son. Sounds like a bad episode o' *Melrose Place* to me! By Peter David, Marty Egeland and Howard Shum. **$1.75**

The Batman Adventures #35

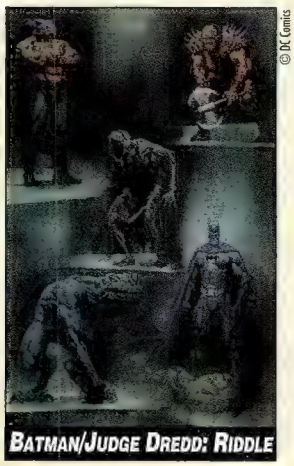
DC COMICS The Caped Crusader loses his mind (literally!) and joins forces with Catwoman. Oh, baby! It's about friggin' time. With Batman gone, Robin throws a 10-kegger and trashes the Bat-cave! By Ty Templeton, Mike Parobeck and Rick Burchett. **$1.75**

Batman Books

DC COMICS Check out *Batman* #522, where the Dark Knight travels to Louisiana to bring in Killer Croc, but ends up confronting Swamp Thing and a bad case of swamp ass. Hey, *you* drive, like, 48 hours straight and see if your tights don't get all squishy. After you've changed your pants, pick up *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #42, in which the Caped Crusader bumps into a rock star on a rampage. No surprise there, except said rock star was murdered years ago! And if that ain't enough Batness for ya, *Detective Comics* #689 sees the Firefly bust out of the slammer and try to join Black Mask's gang. Also, that suave Bruce Wayne (isn't he just dreamy?) isn't too supportive of Jim Gordon's running for mayor. And check out *Batman/Judge Dredd: The Ultimate Riddle*, where Batman and Dredd fight each other to the death, or something like that. **$1.95—EACH; $4.95—*BATMAN/JUDGE DREDD***

© Dark Horse

Agents of Law #5



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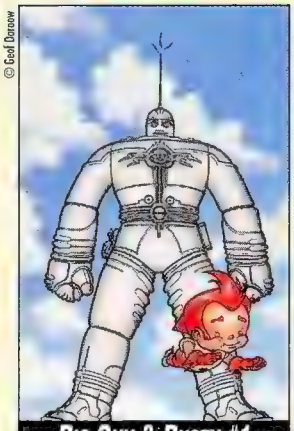
Batman/Judge Dredd: Riddle



© Geof Darrow

Big Guy & Rusty #1

© William Elliott Tucci & © Top Cow

Cyblade/Shi

✓ Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot #1 (of 2)

LEGEND/DARK HORSE The wait is over! This one's got it all: monsters, robots, big guys and plenty of carnage! When a frig-gin'-huge, nasty-lookin' monster starts rippin' up downtown Tokyo (y'know, after he's finished eating everybody, he'll be hungry again in just a couple of hours), it's up to Japan's littlest small fry to come to the rescue. This comic looks to be 100% pure fun! By Frank Miller and Geof Darrow. Miller says, "It's really truly done. It's the biggest, wildest monster comic you ever saw. Geof really went berserk. I had a lot of fun with the script. It's real, straight-ahead superhero action, the kind I haven't had a chance to write much in years. I think people will find it to be a real kick. And while it is definitely suitable for kids, it's anything but Barney." **$4.95**

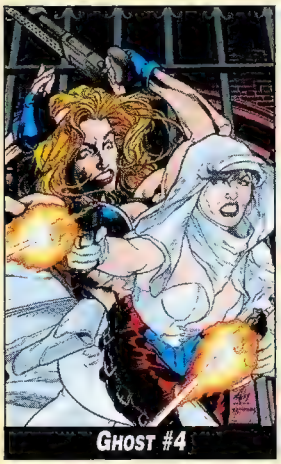
Cyblade/Shi—The Battle for Independents

IMAGE/CRUSADE It's martial arts mayhem at its mostest when that sai-wieldin' Shi teams up with Cyberforce's Cyblade! These two babelicious assassins find themselves in a devastated landscape and must work together to stop a savage superpowered corporate monster. Besides featuring alternate covers by William Tucci and Marc Silvestri, a portion of the book's proceeds will be donated to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund as well as an as-yet unnamed small press publisher. Are those guys generous or what? By Marc Silvestri, William Elliott Tucci and Batt. Also, check out *Shi—Senryaku* #1 (of 3), where Tucci, Jim Lee, Geof Darrow, Joe Quesada, Dave Sim and tons more take you through the first 12 of the 36 strategies of the "Japanese Art of War." And the Shi/Cyblade crossover from Crusade and Image comes next month! **$2.95 EACH**

Flash #105

DC COMICS Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fastest of them all? Speedy Gonzalez? Screw that scurvy rodent, what about the

MORE PICKS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GHOST #4

© Toho Co. Ltd.
GODZILLA #2

Flash? Oh, I see, he's stuck in some wacky dimension thanks to the Mirror Master, who's vehemently searching for his long-lost love, and nothing's gonna get in his way! ¡*Andale, andale*! By Mark Waid, Michael Jan Friedman, Ron Lim and Mark Stegbauer. **$1.75**

GEN[13] #4

IMAGE The "Coda Island" saga continues. Oh, baby! Fairchild finally discovers some romance (i.e.: she gets some!) and the team ends up battling the Coda and a band of swarthy pirates! (Actually, they end up chowin' down like 85 pounds of fried clams at Long John Silver's. Then they all get the trots and explode.) Plenty of fun-filled adventure brought yer way by Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner. **$2.50**

✓ GHOST #4

DARK HORSE Double your pleasure this month, when Barb Wire visits Arcadia and bumps into your favorite lady in white. Hopefully, there'll be plenty o' biting, tearing and Wesson oil-wrasslin'! By Eric Luke, Matt Haley and Tom Simmons. Luke says, "I wanted to use Barb Wire to start to open Ghost up, because she's so full of rage in the first issues, that I'm looking for ways to make her more human. Barb is a great contrast to her, because she's another female character that's real tough. But she's not consumed with rage; for her it's more of a business proposition, because she's a bounty hunter. And so for Ghost, it was a great way for her to look at another woman—operating basically in a man's world—who doesn't allow it to take her over and start to burn her up with rage the way Ghost does." **$2.50**

GLORY #5

IMAGE "Supreme Apocalypse," Part 3 (of 5). Kid Supreme spends the entire issue talking into Glory's cleavage! Also, she and the Kid return to Earth to get Brigade's help against that nasty Lord Darkthornn cowpoke. By Jo Duffy and Mike Deodato Jr. **$2.50**

GODZILLA #2

DARK HORSE Those jerks over at G-Force have come up with a way to defeat Godzilla—they've invented their own giant monster, Cybersaur! Can flesh beat metal? (Maybe. But that's gotta hurt, if you catch our drift.) And where the heck is Godzooky? By Kevin Maguire, Brandon McKinney and Keith Aiken. **$2.50**

GREEN LANTERN #66

DC COMICS Looks like the Flash takes some time out of his busy schedule to drop in on Green Lantern's book. The new Sonar takes over Keystone City and the Flash is just a wee bit too late to help out poor Kyle. By Ron Marz, Paul Pelletier and Romeo Tanghal. **$1.75**

IMPULSE #6

DC COMICS Impulse and one of his wacky school chums confront two big problems—a legendary woodland terror and an abusive father. Some scary stuff by Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

✓ INCREDIBLE HULK #433

MARVEL This issue stars your favorite gun-totin', skull-wearin', my-books-are-all-bein'-canned Punisher, as he and the Hulk mess with S.H.I.E.L.D. Y'know, there's probably nothing worse than walking into the bathroom two minutes after the Hulk—who had like 18 bean burritos for dinner—just flushed. By Peter David and Terry Dodson. **$1.95**

✓ THE LONG HOT SUMMER #3 (OF 3)

MILESTONE/DC Bring on the ice cream and lemonade—the Long Hot Summer's reaching its scorching conclusion. It's the death and rebirth of a city as the riots hit an all-time high, with Dakota's heroes throwing in their support to curtail as much damage as they can. By D.G. Chichester, Denys Cowan and Prentis Rollins. Also, check out the rest of the story in *Hardware* #31, *Icon* #29, *Xombi* #16, *Shadow Cabinet* #16, *Static* #27, *Blood Syndicate* #30 and *Kobalt* #16. **$2.50 EACH; $3.95—*KOBALT* (FINAL ISSUE); $0.99—*STATIC***

✓ MADMAN COMICS #8

LEGEND/DARK HORSE Madman faces his grossest, smelliest and chunkiest foe yet, when he takes on The Puke. That's right, a man made completely of pure vomit. Mmmm-mmm! Don't worry, Madman'll save plenty o' chunks for you guys when he's done moppin' the floor (literally) with The Puke. Lip-smackin' action, brought to you by Mike and Laura Allred. According to Mike, "Besides good,

© Marvel
INCREDIBLE HULK #433

© Mike Allred
MADMAN COMICS #8

MORE PICKS

© Western Publishing

MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER #58

© Dark Horse

THE MASK #6

old-fashioned gross-out fun, it gives me an opportunity to simultaneously express my affection for 1960s big blobby monster movies, and gives me the opportunity to pay tribute to the classic Kirby monsters of the 1960s like the Glop—who most closely resembles the Puke—Fin Fang Foom and Orgo the Unconquerable. Hopefully, some of that affection will come across in issue #8. Frank Einstein almost loses his lunch when he first sees [The Puke], and he turns around and has the dry heaves. And he thinks to himself, 'What's worse: the dry heaves or an all-out splorch?'" **$2.95**

✓ MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER #57-#58

ACCLAIM Just what the hell is Keith Giffen doin' to Magnus?! Whatever it is, he should definitely keep up the incredible pace. As Magnus lies comatose after being shot, Rai tries to find out who tried to do his pal in. The investigation brings Rai to his evil stepbrother's shogunate in Japan. And in issue #58, even though it looks like our hero is on his last breath, 1-A's parting gift to Magnus (a magnetic colon?) is finally triggered, but will it save him in time? By Keith Giffen and Claude St. Aubain. Giffen says, "I don't know what to tell you about issue #57, except that [Magnus] dies. And even though you see him coming out of the grave [on the cover of #58], when I say dies, I mean dead. When he comes back out of the grave, I think there's a pretty legitimate reason for him coming back out. And people will be debating for a long time, is that Magnus who climbed out of that grave?" **$2.50 EACH**

THE MASK #6

DARK HORSE "The Hunt for Green October," Part 1 (of 4). Film buff Ray Tuttle has taken enough crap. He's dying to get even with all the losers who've ticked him off, and now that he's got the Mask, that's just what he does. By Evan "I made dairy products fun" Dorkin and Peter Gross. **$2.50**

THE POWER OF SHAZAM! #7

DC COMICS Hey, if Captain Marvel got his strength from Prometheus instead of Hercules, he'd be goin' around shouting "Spazam!" Anyway, this ish, the Big Red Cheese and Mary Marvel try to use their powers to save li'l Freddy Freeman. Fear not, Spazamites, he should be riding the lightning pretty soon. But where's Uncle Dudley? Y'know, that crazy old fat guy with the unpredictable bladder? By Jerry Ordway, Peter Krause and Mike Manley. **$1.75**

PROPHET ANNUAL #1

IMAGE "Supreme Apocalypse," Part 2 (of 5). After losing big-time in the X-Men timeflip universe (but makin' out like a bandit with those Alpha/Omega chromium issues), Apocalypse packs his bags and heads off to Image to spend the rest of his content, yet now mispropotioned, life. Then Prophet and Supreme fight to the death in a universe-shatterin' battle, while Lord Darkthornn gets ready to open those crash tunnels and release his invasion on Earth. By Chuck Dixon and Stephen Platt. **$2.50**

PUNX #1 (OF 4)

ACCLAIM Welcome to the city of Acclamation, just off the coast of Oregon, where the bizarre and improbable are the norm. It's a city full of punks! Punks, I tells ya!! Those no-good, good-for-nothin' street rats! Get outta my yard, you bast—ummm...what were we saying? Oh, yeah, you'll meet all sorts of cool characters like Cram, Gutter Rat and even Drexel, a rogue Fabergé egg! Guaranteed lunacy from Keith Giffen and Claude St. Aubain. **$2.50**

ROBIN #20

DC COMICS It's Robin vs. The General in a savage showdown! But more importantly, Tim's relationship with Ariana takes a big turn. (She's a guy.) By Chuck Dixon, Mike Wieringo and Stan Woch. **$1.95**

SANDMAN #71

VERTIGO/DC "The Wake," Part 2 (of 3). Join in as the ceremony begins and the Endless trade some family secrets. Plus, Matthew makes a really big decision. By Neil Gaiman and Michael Zulli. Also, check out the 64-page *Sandman Midnight Theatre*, where the two Sandmans finally meet up. Wesley Dodds' painful dreams lead him to England, where he encounters a dark circle of powerful mystics, as well as an imprisoned Morpheus! Great-lookin' stuff by Neil Gaiman, Matt Wagner and Teddy Kristiansen. **$2.50—*SANDMAN*; $6.95—*SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE***

© Acclaim

PUNX #1

© DC Comics

SANDMAN MIDNIGHT THEATRE

MORE PICKS

Sovereign Seven #3

DC COMICS (Insert Hans Conreid voice here:) "Seven little superheroes shall vanish one by one! Seven little superheroes, soon there will be none!" (Sigh. Couldn't resist. And no, no more ten-dollar bets, fanboy.) The team battles a bunch of mythic warriors led by Cascade's bewitched soul! But their greatest threat yet is Cascade's mother, Maitresse (Cascade lied on her! Get it?). She just happens to be the one who destroyed Cascade's entire homeworld. Sheesh! By Chris Claremont, Dwayne Turner and J.K. Moore. **$1.95**

Spawn #34

IMAGE If you thought that Violator creep couldn't get any uglier, heck, you haven't seen New York City's sewers lately. That's just where Spawn's battle with the World's Most Dangerous Clown heads to. You'll also meet Spawn's newest and possibly deadliest foe ever—Marketing! By Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. And why not check out *Spawn: Blood Feud* #2 while yer at it? Seems just about everybody thinks ol' Spawny's a vampire, including John Sansker, who continues his monster hunt! And when Spawn wakes up from some nasty dreams with blood on his gloves, even he has a hard time believing he's not a bloodsucker! Hmm...so *that's* what happened with that whole O.J. thing. By Alan Moore, Tony Daniel and Kevin Conrad. **$1.95—*SPAWN*; $2.25—*SPAWN: BLOOD FEUD***

Spidey Books

MARVEL Too...many...clones...can't...concentrate...losing...consciousness. Well, the fun starts this month over in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #227, as Kaine bites the big one! Yep, your favorite mysterious killer is now dead! Like a doorknob. Kicked the bucket. Yessiree. When you're finished mourning, pick up *Spider-Man: Maximum Clonage Omega* for the clonetastic conclusion to the whole clone shebang. It's the honest-to-God, last, final, ultimate battle with Spidey and the Scarlet Spider versus the Jackal and his clone assassin. That's it. No more clones. Really. Hey, would we lie to you? *Web of Spider-Man* #128 features "Exiled," Part 1 (of 4). Now that the full truth is out on who's the real Webbed Deal, Petey and Ben kiss and make up and decide just who should really wear the true red-and-blue duds. For Part 2 of "Exiled," ya might wanna check out *Amazing Spider-Man* #405, where one o' the two Spider-freaks gets exiled. (10 bucks says Mary Jane catches Peter watchin' the Playboy channel, and kicks 'im out of the house!) *Spider-Man* #62 continues "Exiled," where either Reilly or Parker is on the road, trying to start a new life for himself. And for that jaw-droppin' conclusion, pick up *Spider-Man Unlimited* #10. Apparently, something that happened to Uncle Ben in the past means certain death for Peter or Ben now, which forces the exiled one to return! I just knew Uncle Ben shouldn'ta borrowed all that money from that big guy named Guido. **$1.50—*SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN, WEB OF SPIDER-MAN, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*; $1.95—*SPIDER-MAN*; $4.95—*SPIDER-MAN: MAXIMUM CLONAGE OMEGA*; $3.95—*SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED*** (whew)

© Marvel
Uncanny X-Men #324

© Harris
Vengeance of Vampirella #16

© Marvel
Spectacular Spider-Man #227

© Western Publishing
Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #0

Superman Books

DC COMICS It's Doomsday, Take 3 in *Action Comics* #713, as some new big galoot heads to Metropolis to...gasp...kill Superman! (Insert rolled eyes here.) Some superpowered serial-killin' freak who's adopted the bloody S symbol goes a-huntin' in Metropolis. Then put on yer scuba gear and dive into *Superman: The Man of Steel* #48, where Supes and the guest-starrin' Aquaman try to stop some offshore threat. When the Man of Steel offers to give Aquaman a hand (ouch!), the Sea King takes it the wrong way. Over in *Superman* #104, it's *Escape from Alcatraz*, as the Cyborg busts out of Darkseid's prison, causing our favorite Kryptonian (next to Krypto, of course) to take a little journey into space. And finally, Alpha Centurion touches down in Metropolis over in *Adventures of Superman* #527, causing Superman to consider the reality of all those alternate timelines from that "Zero Hour" thing. **$1.95 EACH**

✓ Superman vs. Aliens #3 (of 3)

DARK HORSE/DC Hey, somebody better send Lois some flowers, 'cause it sure don't look too good for the Man of Steel. The Big Guy's losing his powers fast, which ain't a good thing when you're going up against one o' them Alien Queens! And to make matters like six billion times worse, Supes has also got a chestburster inside o' him. Talk 'bout yer indigestion! Plenty of

BLOOD FEUD™

SOME THINGS ARE BETTER LEFT IN THE DARK!

ALAN MOORE *story* **TONY DANIEL** *pencils* **KEVIN CONRAD** *inks*

A FOUR ISSUE MINI-SERIES STARTING WITH A PREVIEW IN SPAWN 31.
GREAT STORY, INCREDIBLE ARTWORK AND ONLY FROM IMAGE COMICS.

MORE PICKS

squashed bugs brought yer way by Dan Jurgens and Kevin Nowlan. Jurgens says, "We really get to find out what happens when one of the little chestbusters is inside of Superman and tries to get out. I think that's sort of the tension point that the book is going to boil down to, and is going to make for some real interesting stuff. When we dreamed up this project, that's a visual we all had in mind right from the start. What happens if one of those little guys gets into Superman?" **$4.95**

Turok, Dinosaur Hunter #0

ACCLAIM Whaddaya think would happen if Turok took a trip to Bedrock, bagged Wilma, kicked Pebbles for a field goal and gutted that honker Dino like a fish? Fred'd probably call in a favor from the Great Gazoo and get Shooter back in Valiant. That'd teach 'im. Anyways, this special zero issue tells all about your favorite Dinosaur Hunter, including the Kiowa migrations from the Black Hills back in the 1600s and Turok and Andar's early adventures in the Lost Land. By Tim Truman and Rags Morales. Also, check out *Turok, Dinosaur Hunter* #33, where Turok goes up against the Lost Land's Radio Men and their insanely grotesque Blob! By Tim Truman and Paul Gulacy. **$2.50 EACH**

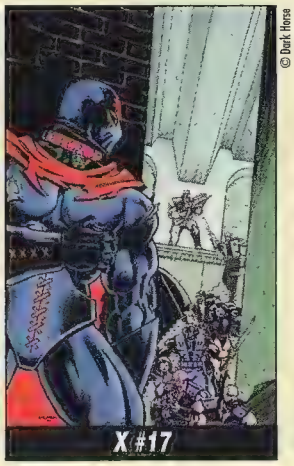
Vengeance of Vampirella #16

HARRIS The "Mystery Walk" continues as Lilith starts showin' up in Vampirella's dreams and sends a couple of kids out of Eden as punishment for Vampi's actions. Also, the Offspring throw in their two cents to help out Vampi and Walker stave off the Progeny assassins. By Tom Sniegoski, Kevin Sharpe and Caesar. **$2.95**

X #17

DARK HORSE Let's get something out of the way up front—if you're not currently reading *X*, then yer missing one of the most enjoyable comics out there at the moment. Steven Grant's action-packed storytelling hits you pretty hard right from the start, and doesn't let up for a second. So, read it! Anyway, this ish sees X dealing with a bunch of government-sanctioned mercs led by that rat-bastard Headhunter. They've come to Arcadia to bring back Hothouse Rose—one way or another! By Steven Grant, Javier Saltares and Andrew Pepoy. **$2.50**

© Marvel
Web of Spider-Man #128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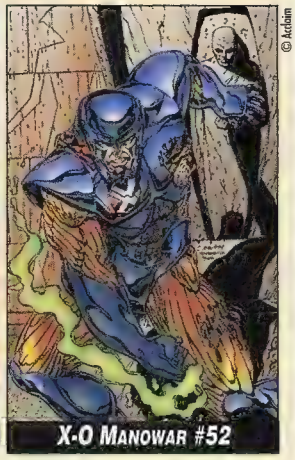
X #17

© Twentieth Century Fox
X-Files #7


© Acclaim
X-O Manowar #52

✓ X-Files #7

TOPPS COMICS Seems there's a smiley-face killer on the loose (Ooooh! Ooooh! I know! I know! It's Ozymandias!). Some 15 people have been murdered with a hole in their foreheads and a smile on their kissers. Scully and Mulder jump on the case and find all sorts of icky, spooky phenomena going on. There's probably some weird spaceship in there somewhere, too. By Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard. Petrucha says, "Mulder and Scully get involved with a serial killer who, before he kills his victims, wants to alert them to the fact that what they think is the world is actually an illusion. His method of doing this is by drilling a hole in their heads. It's an actual practice called treppaning, which has been used since ancient times to give the brain more oxygen and lead to a higher level of consciousness. Mulder thinks that the serial killer is also a treppaner and has a higher level of consciousness, and Scully disagrees." **$2.95**

X-Men books

MARVEL Seems the X-Men are takin' on some young punks these days. *Uncanny X-Men* #324 features Cannonball's first day as a certified X-Man. (But when he takes some photos of Rogue in the shower, she kicks him in the family jewels, shoves his head in the toilet and flushes! Punk.) Mutate over to *X-Men* #44 and learn the fate of Colossus. Also, Juggernaut and Amanda the Acolyte have a certain little secret they're sharing. (They both sleep nekkid!) **$1.95 EACH**

X-O Manowar #51-#52

ACCLAIM Aric returns home and looks for a new pad. (I hear Congers is nice.) When he gets to what used to be Dacia, he quickly learns that it ain't easy leavin' home, as he goes up against some freakish Orb Industries experiment (Coke II? Fat-free Ho-Hos?). Then X-O's gotta take on Crescendo's bad boys, who just can't get enough of our favorite Visigoth. It's an all-out armor fest, with a shocking finale. (Aric finds out that Robin's girlfriend's a guy.) By Ron Marz, Bart Sears, Andy Smith and Ray Kryssing. **$2.50 EACH**

AFTER
BRUTALLY MURDERING HIS BEST FRIEND AL SIMMONS

AFTER
CONTRACTING THE LETHAL AIDS VIRUS

AFTER
TAKING HIS OWN LIFE

AFTER
USURPING THE MANTLE OF LORD OF HELL HIMSELF

HIS ADVENTURES REALLY BEGIN...

CHAPEL #1

THE ONGOING SERIES

BRIAN WITTEN
CALVIN IRVING

CRYPT #1

~~SUPREME~~
~~KIRBY~~
~~SENTINEL II~~
~~THERMAL~~
~~COLDSNAP~~
~~KAYO~~

THE BODY COUNT RISES IN AUGUST!

2 ISSUE MINI-SERIES

ROBERT NAPTON
SHELBY ROBERTSON

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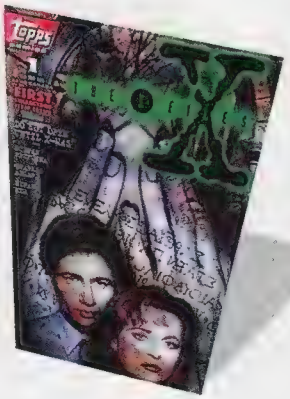
TOP TEN COMICS

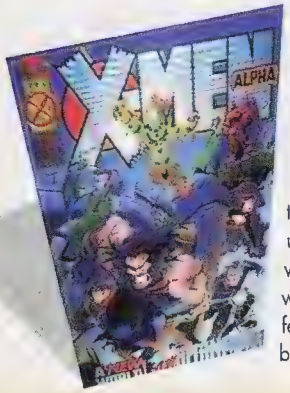
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are this month's hottest back issues.**

1. THE X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha ARTIST: Charles Adlard



It seems those paranormal-hunting, conspiracy-blowing, alien-finding experts Dana Scully and Fox Mulder have weaseled their way to the very top of the charts. Guess it really does pay to have government connections. Apparently, the growing success and cult status of FOX's hit sci-fi/thriller TV show has definitely helped Topps' keen comic. (Heck, I know a guy who was so obsessed with the show that he welded the doors of his Dodge Charger shut, painted the whole thing bright orange, drank 87 gallons of moonshine and...oops, sorry. Wrong show.) Some nifty storytelling and wicked art haven't hurt either! And for you Marvel fans out there who are wondering why Wolverine's not on the cover: Get a grip! The only mutants you'll find in this puppy are three-headed alien freaks coming down to Earth to experiment on us lowly humans. But fear not, Scully and Mulder'll get to 'em first. And we'll all be watching.



2. X-MEN ALPHA #1

WRITERS: Scott Lobdell and Mark Waid ARTISTS: Roger Cruz and Tim Townsend

Fan response to Marvel's "Age of Apocalypse" has been overwhelming, to say the least, and this baby's where it all begins. (To tell ya the truth, the art and story in *Alpha* are pretty spankin' good. Just don't tell Marvel we said that, OK? We gotta protect our rep.) Here's the skinny: Legion goes back in time to assassinate Magneto, but ends up killing his dad Professor X instead, which in turn means that Legion is never born (which should mean that he was never able to go back in time in the first place, so he couldn't go back in time to kill his dad, which...means...argghh...head...hurt). Anyway, what we're left with is a whole new world (just like in *Aladdin*!) featuring a bunch of "new" X-Men, who're fighting for their lives "in a world they never made!" (Hot dog! We've been dyin' to fit that overused comic slogan in *Wizard*, and after four years, we did it!)

3. SHI #1

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Harvey Mercadoocasio

What can be said about *Shi* that hasn't been said before? Probably nuthin', seeing as how Bill Tucci's action-packed, thoughtfully written, babelicious assassin-starring, gorgeously drawn comic has been in the Top Ten for like a gazillion months now. And if you haven't read it yet, go to it. But if you have, go read it again, and then make sure you pick up the Shi/Cyblade two-issue crossover scheduled for this July and August, which pits together two of the hottest (and deadliest) assassins this side of Barry White. Hey, that guy gets all the babes. So, if *you* wanna get babes, and plenty of 'em, read *Shi*! What more could ya ask for in a comic?

4. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

The Queen of the Dead is still living high on the hog, thanks to her continual appearances in Evil Ernie's various mini-series, as well as her own pair of minis (ba-da-bump!). This particular popular mini-series (her first, and far from her last) tells the tale of a cute li'l chick named Hope who ends up with no pupils, highly inflated bajoobies, control of the dead, and a sizable load of strife. (Yeah, there're a few steps somewhere in between, but I'll be damned if I'm gonna be the one to tell ya. It involves Hell, Satan, angry townsfolk and a whole bunch o' good stuff like that. So go read it yerself!) And when you're done with that, go check out *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell*, her second very spiffy mini.

THE X-FILES ™ & © Twentieth Century Fox. X-MEN: ALPHA ™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group. SHI ™ & © William Elliott Tucci. LADY DEATH ™ & © Brian Pulido.

5. GEN[13] #1 (MINI-SERIES)

WRITER: Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

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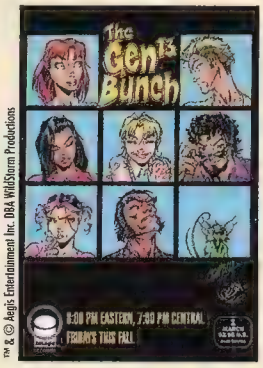
Hey, kids. Welcome to the Gen[13] corner. On your right, you'll notice a newfangled variant cover to the first issue of our ongoing series. Quite a hoot that one was. Right next to us is our mini-series' first issue. And just below us you'll see the second issue of that hot series. Yep, everything looks to be in order here. Well, I've got two words for alla you fans out there: enough already!!!! No, no, that's not right. I'm just bitter because I'm shackled to my chair here at *Wizard* HQ every month and forced to come up with some original ways to say nice things about Gen[13]. Not hard, you say? Try doing it each and every month for like a year! *Then* maybe you'll see why I did what I did...why they all had to die, and how I, after eating their flesh, became...uh...sorry. Let's go to the next entry.

6. GEN[13] #1 VARIANTS (ONGOING SERIES)

WRITER: Brandon Choi
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

Last month, we showcased all the 11 variant covers (which are all going for pretty high rates) to the first issue of this fun-filled comic series, so if ya missed 'em, get bent! But it'll be neat to see if the first issue of the ongoing series actually surpasses the first issue of the mini-series in value. Why, it'd be unprecedented! Speakin' o' "unprecendentedness," didja know that they really do eat french fries with mayonnaise over in Holland? And they eat them in a big paper cone. I wouldn't recommend getting the large size, though, 'cause halfway through that oil-trap you'll be projectile-vomiting a yellow and white rainbow all over the streets of Amsterdam. And while you're at it, try dippin' yer fries in some blue cheese. Now, that's eatin'!



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7. GEN[13] #2 (MINI-SERIES)

WRITERS: Brandon Choi and Jeff Mariotte
ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

Yep, it's hot. In other news, *What's Happening!!* was one o' the greatest shows ever made. That show just cracks us up. We absolutely love the secret origin of the whole gang. Y'see, Rog was sittin' on a seesaw at the playground, when Rerun came over and sat on the other end, which caused Rog to fly up in the air and land in a sandbox, where he met Dwayne. You just don't get entertainment like that on *Seinfeld*. And there's that other time when Rerun joined the cult that worshipped the head of lettuce, and they made him shave his head and give them all his money. But then he overheard them making fun of him ("I get such a kick watching that fatboy squat!"), so he wised up and killed 'em all with nerve gas. Great stuff.

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8. WEAPON X #1

WRITER: Larry Hama
ARTISTS: Adam Kubert, Karl Kesel, Dan Green and Chris Warner (whew!)

Well, lookie here. It's one o' dem "Age of Apocalypse" books. Looks like even in a time-flipped universe, our main man Wolverine's still the best at what he does. It also appears that Logan finally gets to bag Jean, now that he's only got one hand. (Hmm...maybe Aquaman oughta give it a go!) This series sees Logan and Jean team up with the human resistance over in London to put an end to Apocalypse's rule. And while they're over in Europe, they head to France, where Jerry Lewis is king (Damn you, Apocalypse!), and proceed to gut him like a fish. Hmmm...I betcha that even in that Apocalypse timeflip universe, the French would still surrender to anybody who was willing to listen. Damn frogs.

™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

9. X-MAN #1

WRITER: Jeph Loeb
ARTISTS: Steve Skroce with inkers Sellers, Smith, LaRosa and Conrad

Gosh, this "Age of Apocalypse" thing is just outta control! This here X-Man guy is basically Cable as a teenager. Seeing as how—in the "true" X-reality—little Nate aged some 60 years in only like three or so of our years, it's only fair that we finally get to see the timeflip version as a grunged-out, whiny teenager. Here, Forge becomes a surrogate father to Nate and teaches him to one day destroy Apocalypse. The big pull here is that X-Man (which, oddly enough, sounds a lot like X-Men) is now a regular character in the real Marvel Universe with his own comic. And hey, the timeflip evil Beast also made the transition to "our" universe, though I can't take him too seriously, seeing as how he looks like a big, blue, talking fir tree.

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10. SHI #2

WRITERS: William Tucci and Peter Gutierrez
ARTISTS: William Tucci and Michael Bair with Nelson Asencio

Y'know, for a great-lookin', killer assassin, Shi's not too swift. I mean, how's she supposed to sneak around in the shadows (That's what those ninja-types do, ain't it?) and cut people's heads off, when she's wearing alla that white face paint? You'd easily see her comin' a mile away! Anyway, this book's still hot, and for the same reasons *Shi* #1's so friggin hot (it's also just as good as *Shi* #1). So rather than waste your time over here, I'll tell a joke. There's this hamburger, see, and he walks into a bar and places an order. The bartender looks him up and down and says, "I'm sorry, we don't serve food here." Get it? Food? Ha, ha, ha! (Boy, do we give you your money's worth or what?) ☆

™ & © William Elliott Tucci

TOP 100

Here's the list for JUNE...
a countdown of the most-ordered titles as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

(CE=Collector's Edition)

1 year ago... what was hot

1. X-Men #35 (Marvel)
2. Uncanny X-Men #315 (Marvel)
3. Violator #2 (Image)
4. Wolverine #84 (Marvel)
5. Pitt #5 (Image)
6. Gen[13] #5 (Image)
7. Mighty Morphin Power Rangers #1 (Hamilton)
8. X-Force #37 (Marvel)
9. Batman/Punisher: Lake of Fire (DC/Marvel)
10. Batman #510 (DC)

2 years ago...

1. Deathmate Prologue (Image/Valiant)
2. Spawn #14 (Image)
3. Shadowhawk II #2 (Image)
4. Cyberforce #0 (Image)
5. Sabretooth #1 (Marvel)
6. Savage Dragon #1 (Image)
7. Union #1 (Image)
8. Doom's IV #1 (Image)
9. Secret Weapons #1 (Valiant)
10. X-Force #25 (Marvel)

3 years ago...

1. Amazing Spider-Man #365 (Marvel)
2. Spirits of Vengeance #1 (Marvel)
3. X-Men #11 (Marvel)
4. Spawn #2 (Image)
5. Uncanny X-Men #291 (Marvel)
6. X-Force #13 (Marvel)
7. Ghost Rider #28 (Marvel)
8. Savage Dragon (mini-series) #1 (Image)
9. The Infinity War #3 (Marvel)
10. Spider-Man #25 (Marvel)

1. Spawn: Blood Feud #1 (Image)
2. Spawn #33 (Image)
3. X-Men #43 (Marvel)
4. Uncanny X-Men #323 (Marvel)
5. Gen[13] #3 (Image)
6. Generation X #6 (Marvel)
7. X-Man #5 (Marvel)
8. X-Man #6 (Marvel)
9. X-Factor #113 (Marvel)
10. Lady Death: Between H. & H. #4 (Chaos!)
11. Cable #22 (Marvel)
12. Sovereign Seven #2 (DC)
13. Excalibur #88 (Marvel)
14. Spider-Man: Max. Clonage Alpha (Marvel)
15. Amazing Spider-Man #404 (Marvel)
16. Superman vs. Aliens #2 (Dark Horse/DC)
17. WildC.A.T.s #21 (Image)
18. Spider-Man #61 (Marvel)
19. Pitt #10 (Image)
20. Web of Spider-Man #127 (Marvel)
21. The X-Files #6 (Topps)
22. Batman #521 (DC)
23. Violator vs. Badrock #2 (Image)
24. Superman #103 (DC)
25. Action Comics #712 (DC)
26. Adventures of Superman #526 (DC)
27. Superman: The Man of Steel #47 (DC)
28. Detective Comics #688 (DC)
29. Grifter #2 (Image)
30. Team 7—Objective: Hell #2 (Image)
31. Cyberforce #15 (Image)
32. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #74 (DC)
33. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #41 (DC)
34. Sandman #70 (DC)
35. Robin #19 (DC)
36. The X-Files Special Edition #1 (Topps)
37. Incredible Hulk #432 (Marvel)
38. Azrael #7 (DC)
39. Avengelyne #2 (Maximum Press)
40. Weapon Zero #T-Minus-3 (Image)
41. Ripclaw #4 (Image)
42. Spider-Man: The Lost Years #1 (Marvel)
43. Star Wars: River of Chaos #2 (Dark Horse)
44. Vengeance of Vampirella #15 (Harris)
45. Backlash #9 (Image)
46. Glory #4 (Image)
47. Venom Super Size Special #1 (Marvel)
48. X-Men 2099 A.D. #23 (Marvel)
49. Catwoman #23 (DC)
50. Green Lantern #65 (DC)
51. StormWatch #24 (Image)
52. Prophet Vol. 2 #3 (Image)
53. StormWatch #23 (Image)
54. *Batman Forever* Movie Adaptation CE (DC)
55. Nightwing: Alfred's Return (DC)
56. Operation Knightstrike #2 (Image)
57. Regulators #1 (Image)
58. Superboy #18 (DC)
59. The Maxx #17 (Image)
60. The New Shadowhawk #1 (Image)
61. Bloodstrike: Assassin #1 (Image)
62. Tarzan vs. Predator: ATEC #1 (D. Horse)
63. Spider-Man: The Jackal Files #1 (Marvel)
64. Savage Dragon #20 (Image)
65. Kill Razor Special #1 (Image)
66. Batman: Riddler—The Riddler Factory (DC)
67. Flash #104 (DC)
68. Batman: Two-Face—Crime and Punishment (DC)
69. Star Wars: Jabba the Hutt—Hunger (D. Horse)
70. Ruins #1 (Marvel)
71. Aliens vs. Predator: War #2 (Dark Horse)
72. Ice Age—Magic: The Gathering #4 (Acclaim)
73. Deathblow #17 (Image)
74. Ash #4 (Event Comics)
75. Magic: TG—The Shadow Mage #4 (Acclaim)
76. Spider-Man 2099 A.D. #34 (Marvel)
77. Fallen Empires—Magic: TG #2 (Acclaim)
78. Deadly Duo II #1 (Image)
79. Ghost #3 (Dark Horse)
80. Codename Stryke Force #14 (Image)
81. Flash Annual #8 (DC)
82. Avengers #389 (Marvel)
83. Star #1 (Image)
84. Union #5 (Image)
85. Cybrid #1 (Maximum Press)
86. Team Youngblood #19 (Image)
87. Supreme #29 (Image)
88. Star Wars Droids #3 (Dark Horse)
89. Aquaman #11 (DC)
90. Beavis & Butt-Head #18 (Marvel)
91. Knightmare #5 (Image)
92. Lobo #18 (DC)
93. Captain America #442 (Marvel)
94. Wonder Woman Annual #4 (DC)
95. Brigade #21 (Image)
96. What If? #76 (Marvel)
97. Species #1 (Dark Horse)
98. The Books of Magic #15 (DC)
99. Daredevil #343 (Marvel)
100. Justice League America #102 (DC)

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Wizard Market WATCH

by **Jon Warren** and **Marc Wilkofsky**

What Gets YOU Hot?

Well, *that* headline got your attention, huh? Now that summer's hit us, comic publishers are starting to realize that turning on the fans actually makes the market hotter! Here's several publishers, titles and issues that are doing just that (and a few that are doing the opposite).

THE HOT RECENT RELEASES (1991-95)

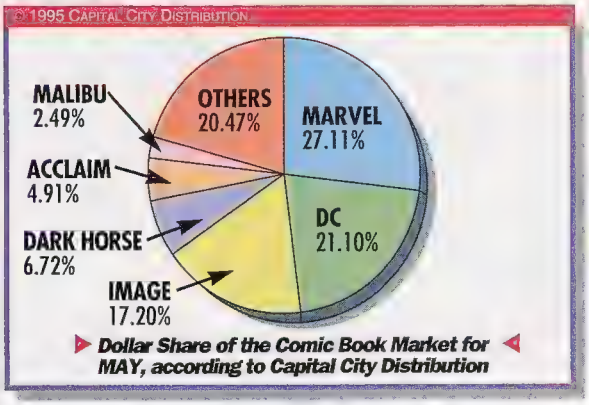
• ***Gen*[13] ongoing series** (Image). A few years ago, any publisher that released *thirteen* variant editions of one issue would have only burned bridges between itself and its readers. Image has just shown how that's changed: collectors are ripping into stores in a mass-grabbing mania surrounding the 11 *Gen*[13] #1 variant covers—each currently hitting values of $20 and up—and the two regular covers, already at the far-from-shabby $5 mark. However, all this might cool off when the influx of collector's edition sets hits stores in June. And keep both eyes on WildStorm's super-hot ***Team 7*** series—an intensely selling spin-off of the company's teen team book.

• **X-Men titles** (Marvel). The X-verse has several solid movers to its credit, including the four main "Age of Apocalypse" beginners: ***X-Men* #41**, ***X-Men: Alpha***, ***Amazing X-Men* #1** and ***Astonishing X-Men* #1**; ***Uncanny X-Men* #244** and **#266** are still major watchables, by the way—the daring debuts of Jubilee and Gambit, respectively.

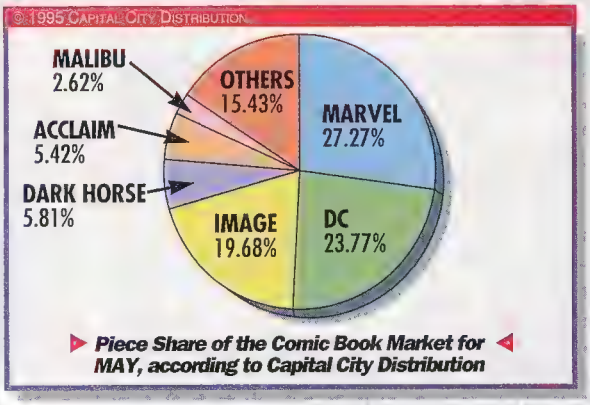
THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN™ & © Marvel Entertainment Group

• **Recent Spider-Man books** (Marvel). The Clone story aside (many folks would like it to be *way* aside), several Spidey issues are reaching new value levels, including ***Amazing Spider-Man* #361-#363** (early Carnage issues, with appearances by Venom and Peter's "parents" as a bonus), **#386-#387** (the first two parts of the integral "Lifetheft" epic, in which the secret of these "parents" was revealed), and **#400** (the death of Aunt May), along with ***Spectacular Spider-Man* #221** (the fairly fast-selling death of Dr. Octopus issue) and ***Web of Spider-Man* #117** (the first full meeting between the two Spideys). And hold onto your *SSM* #226s—in which the clone is revealed to be the *real* Peter Parker!

• ***X-Files*** (Topps Comics). Though this stormy series didn't see a price increase this month, you can rest assured that interest in Topps' biggest title will definitely increase until Scully and Mulder settle down and have a couple o' kids. Among the reasons for this craze, including the fact that the comic adapts a wildly hot TV show, there's a certain reason that Robert Letshcer II, from Key Comics



Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for MAY, according to Capital City Distribution



Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for MAY, according to Capital City Distribution

DOLLAR SHARE: Marvel watchers might be surprised to note that the company's share sank 6.92 points in May, the biggest fall any comic company's taken in almost a year. Reasons may include the animosity retailers have towards Marvel after its distribution policy changes. Meanwhile, Image jumped 6.69 points (thanks to seven new titles that month), and DC, 1.9 (*Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #1, *Sovereign Seven* #1 and *Wonder Woman* #100 all helped).

PIECE SHARE: "*Ouch!*" bellows Marvel as it suffers a huge 10.49-point drop. A sign of things to come, or will the company's situation improve? The company's "adopted child" Malibu only fell 0.65 points. Every other company did well: Acclaim's share went up 0.3, Dark Horse's a solid 0.74, DC advanced 2.41 points and Image fared the best with a whopping 7.65-point increase—looks like May's *WildStorm Rising* equaled share rising!

in Scottsdale, Ariz., brings up: "*X-Files*' brisk publication schedule has hooked many readers. Issues **#1 through #4** are very brisk movers here!" If a solid monthly schedule is considered "brisk," this series has something else going for it.

• ***Angela* mini-series** (Image). Hey, anyone out there who bought a copy of ***Angela* #1, #2** or **#3**—you've got a killer collectible on your hands (along with a nifty Neil Gaiman read). And Angela's debut book, ***Spawn* #9**, is seeing some strong market activity—keep your eyes affixed to that baby and *all* the *Spawn* books, which may just owe their increase to the popular Spawn toy line.

• **Batman books** (DC Comics). Several Bat-books with Two-Face and Riddler appearances from all the various time periods—including ***Batman Annual* #13** and **#14** (Two-Face stories) and the Modern Age's ***Batman* #263, #279** and **#317** (Riddler appearances)—are currently getting the market spotlight. These two villains' entry into the public (i.e., not-just-comic-collecting) world with June's *Batman Forever* film is responsible for this influx of popularity. Also, with the sequel to ***Batman: Vengeance of Bane*** due out this August, this first appearance of the guy who broke Batman's back might be one to look out for. For that matter, keep your eyes peeled on all the **"Knightfall"** issues of *Batman* and *Detective Comics*. Speaking of which...

• ***Azrael*** (DC). It had to happen, and Bat-collectors are pretty darn pleased that it finally did: the solo series starring central "Knightfall/quest" player Jean Paul Valley is catching on with readers. Looks like people have noticed the interesting swings writer Denny O'Neil and artist Barry Kitson are taking on the popular character. Meanwhile, a couple of ***Batman: Sword of Azrael*** issues—**#1** and **#4**—are catchin' action, too. The fact that it took so long for the *Azrael* series to rise to glory evinces a major lesson for collectors: nothing's a sure deal in the comic collecting world these days.

• **The Bad Babe books** (various publishers). The comic world's Bad Girls are still enjoying some good times. Fronting the steady BG trend are at least five titles with strong market legs: ***Lady Death*** (the success of her—and her buddy Evil Ernie's—back issues is as remarkable as that of her current issues' high sales; by the way, we've finally compiled her #1/2s' values, and they're in this issue's PG), ***Vengeance of Vampirella*** (Harris' current top seller), ***Shi*** (whose first unstoppable issue meets *Vengeance of Vampi* #1 in value this very month) and ***Razor*** (anyone can feel safe buying an issue of this violent vixen's still-moving series). We predict the next heroine to light up the applause sign will be Dark Horse's **Barb Wire**, who's getting her own movie starring *Baywatch*'s Pamela Anderson!

• ***Ash*** (Event Comics). There's nothing like reader support and creator following to help out a book, and *Ash* has got 'em both. Don't think you can easily find a copy of **#1** or **#2** out there, and don't worry about being burned by the story, 'cause the quality of Quesada and Palmiotti's title—about the adventures of a firefighter/superhero—makes it worth whatever money you put into it.

• ***Bone*** (Cartoon Books). You just can't stop those cute little critters—**#1** hits the $200 mark this month! *Bone*'s surprising, but necessary, move to Image Comics will surely charge up the excitement even more for earlier printings.

• **DC's Bad Babes. *Vamps*!** Getcher *Vamps* while you can! Vertigo's already-classic vampire biker babe mini is showing its market teeth, as the pools of available issues (especially **#1**) are slowly running dry. ***Catwoman***'s top back issues include her ongoing series' **first issue** and **#12**, the latter of which returned Bruce Wayne to the Batsuit, and every issue of her 1989 mini-series. And if there was a "Who Will Take Off Next?" mystery in the Bad Girl area, Huntress, Black Canary and Thorn are prime suspects—DC apparently has a variety of powerful plans for all these ladies.

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

Photo: Al Ortega

1 **Todd McFarlane**
Spawn

Photo: Sampsel & Preston

2 **J. Scott Campbell**
Gen13

Photo: J. Schuyler

3 **Greg Capullo**
Spawn

Photo: J. Schuyler

4 **Adam Kubert**
Wolverine

Photo: J. Schuyler

5 **Andy Kubert**
X-Men

6 **Dale Keown**
Pitt

Photo: Al Ortega

7 **Joe Quesada**
Ash

8 **Chris Bachalo**
Generation X

Photo: Jon Gipe

9 **Steven Hughes**
Lady Death

10 **John Byrne**
upcoming: *Wonder Woman*

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

Photo: Al Ortega

1 **Neil Gaiman**
Sandman

2 **Peter David**
Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

Photo: Sampsel & Preston

3 **Brandon Choi**
Gen13

Photo: J. Schuyler

4 **Scott Lobdell**
Uncanny X-Men, Generation X

Photo: Al Ortega

5 **Fabian Nicieza**
X-Men

6 **John Byrne**
upcoming: *Wonder Woman*

Photo: J. Schuyler

7 **Ron Marz**
Green Lantern, X-O Manowar

8 **Dan Jurgens**
Superman, Solar

Photo: Mitch Jenkins

9 **Alan Moore**
From Hell, Spawn: BloodFeud, WildC.A.T.s

Photo: Al Ortega

10 **Jeff Smith**
Bone

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

Market WATCHERS

What did I start? A certain question I asked in #44's column has resulted in a barrage of interesting replies. Here's a solid selection...

Dear Market Watchers,

In issue #44, you asked whether anyone can still afford back issues along with the glut of new product currently published. My answer is a heartfelt "yes." With the rising prices of new comics, many back issues are cheap in comparison. Consequently, I am scaling back my purchases of new titles and buying more back issues.

For example, I've recently been filling in my Marvel *Star Wars* and *Daredevil* collections. These books are price-comparable with new issues and, for my money, are more fun. Yes, I know the paper quality and coloring of older books are archaic, but the stories are basically more entertaining than the stuff being turned out today. I'd much rather shell out three or four bucks for a vintage John Byrne or Frank Miller book than pay the same amount for some holographic, glow-in-the-dark, Chromium piece of crap. The older books were published for entertainment purposes, rather than for shock value. Of course, I purchase higher-priced back issues more sparingly. Hey, comics are great, but I have to pay my bills.

In conclusion, while I keep my comic budget fairly constant, I am now spending a greater percentage on back issues. Eventually, I'll stop purchasing the new stuff altogether.

Derek H. Noonan
Hobe Sound, FL

Derek, I agree with your important point that most of yesterday's comics were entertaining because they were produced for the reader's enjoyment rather than his impoverishment, but there are a few excellent books today that stand out from the foil-filled junkyard, like the untouched-by-gimmicks *Bone* and *Sin City*. Unfortunately, many of these books will chew on your wallet just as fast as comparably enjoyable back issues, as the next writer notes.

Dear Market Watchers:

Your question in *Wizard* #44 seems to beg the larger question: are comic books affordable at all anymore? Even though cover prices have increased by leaps and bounds over the last few years, avid readers are loathe to quit their favorite titles and characters. Comic publishers are not stupid: they've managed to nickel and dime their way up to cover prices of $1.95 (or more) for their most popular titles, twice as much as they were charging a scant six or so years ago. With its Superman and Batman titles jumping to this price, DC now rounds out the group of major publishers (including Marvel, Image, Dark Horse and most others) charging hefty prices for flagship titles.

Even after the high-inflation era of the '70s, comics cost no more than 35 cents apiece. Have paper and ink costs risen so high that comics' prices have more than quintupled over the last 15 years? Are creators being paid that much more? Most would agree that better story quality is not the reason for price hikes. Publishers themselves claim that price increases are due to the usage of upgraded paper and color separation. Perhaps I am in the minority, but I would rather be able to afford more well-written comics than to only be able to purchase a few "glossy format" all-splashy-color-and-no-story comics.

As for back issues, most truly well-written ones cost five dollars at least (even those in *Wizard*'s Good & Cheap section). Many (but not all) collectors are young and have little income to spare, even to follow the adventures of one of their favorite heroes. It's tough to keep up with the high-priced current storylines, much less scrape

CONTINUED ON PAGE 148

• ***Wonder Woman*** (DC). *Wonder Woman* **#90**, the issue with which superhot artist Mike Deodato Jr. jumped on as a regular, is quickly surpassing **#88** and **#89**, the Circe issues, in value. And with writer-artist John Byrne's issues due out any day now, the spotlight ain't shying away from DC's Amazon princess.

• **Newly hot books** (various publishers). Books to watch out for include Dark Horse's ***Ghost*** (the price of her debut book, *Comics' Greatest World: Arcadia Week 3* , is soaring, and we suggest that you watch her 1994 special and ongoing series), ***The Maxx*** (undoubtedly due to his new, perfectly-adapted-from-the-comics MTV 'toon), ***Judge Dredd*** (a result of this summer's Stallone flick), and ***Cry for Dawn*** (thanks to Dawn's return in Sirius' *Dawn* #1 this July). On top of all this market action, more mature collectors might be interested in what Ed Manley, from Baltimore, Md.'s J & E Cards and Comics, is raving about DC's Vertigo line: "It's selling well in our stores, [especially] the #1 issues, such as *Vamps, Black Orchid, Moonshadow, Ghostdancing* and *Preacher*. *Preacher* is selling for more than cover here, and continually sells out." Speaking of Black Orchid, the second installment of her original mini experienced some price growth this month; the fact that the series is an early Neil Gaiman work has always helped it, but the Batman and Riddler appearances in #2 certainly didn't hurt either.

MODERN AGE SELLERS (1970-90)

• ***New Mutants*** (Marvel). While those ol' Legion debut issues (you know, *New Mutants* **#26-#28** and **#44**, *Adventure* #247—whoops, scratch that last one) have been blastin' off for months, Marvel's fourth graphic novel—the one which introduced the New Mutants themselves—has been a hot number for years; it just hasn't moved too much lately. However, founding member Cannonball's recent promotion to X-Man status appears to be causing this book's own sizable climb.

• ***Sandman*** (DC). We've just got a brief note for you on this particular title: "Watch that **#22**!" We're proud to say we mentioned this book in *Wizard* #29's Comic Watch, recognizing it as young Daniel's entrance into the "Sandmythos." Now that Lyta's child is the new God of Dreams, it looks like this book'll quit taking baby steps in the market.

• **Punisher books** (Marvel). Anyone who thought Punisher back issues would become happening books because of the recent replacement epic made a big mistake, 'cause several of 'em are headed towards Downville in the Price Guide. Why? 'Cause all the Punisher titles've gone the way of TV's *Blossom*—they've been canceled. And Castle's first app in ***Amazing Spider-Man*** **#129** isn't the force behind that book's activity this month; it's actually the first appearance of the Jackal! He's the Spider-Clone creator who was a central figure in the Clone saga, which brings us to...

• **The Amazing Spidey-Slump** (Marvel). The original Modern Age *Amazing Spider-Man* Clone books are past the value revival stage. Any collector who was skeptical about this spectacle was right on the money; those who bought *ASM* **#149-#151** are in for a bumpy ride. But wait—now that we know who the real Spidey is, some interest might return to these books, which apparently intro'd "our" Spidey.

• ***Aquaman*** (DC). Hey—what've you got against Aquaman? He's been around for a looong while, and he's finally getting his due. Of course, that's not to say he wasn't handled well in his earlier titles, the first of which (from 1962-78) is making big waves nowadays, thanks to the new book's heat.

POPULAR SILVER AGE BOOKS (1955-70)

• ***Detective Comics*** (DC). Issue **#225**, the rare first appearance and origin of Martian Manhunter, led 'Tec's price increases this month, moving up to $3,900. Issues drawn by fan favorite Neal Adams also moved up this month, including #369, #395, #397,

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#400, #402, #404, #407, #408 and #410.

• ***Journey into Mystery*** (Marvel). In the across-the-board price increase for this title this month, leading the way is **#83**, the first appearance and origin of Thor, moving up to $3,200. Issues #1-#82 are among the hot "pre-hero" Marvel titles that collectors have been so eager to buy.

• ***Showcase*** (DC). Out of the hottest *Showcase* issues at this time, two are steamin' like crazy: **#60** heralds the first appearance of the Silver Age Spectre and **#61** offers the second part of the Spectre two-parter.

• ***Silver Surfer*** (Marvel). The original series continues to be a strong seller. The entire run moved up slightly this month, with #1 moving up to $400. And the Kirby Silver Surfer is definitely the only true one (go see *Crimson Tide* to figure out what we're talkin' 'bout.)

• ***Space Adventures* #33** (Charlton). Why is this book hot, you wonder? Because it's the first appearance and origin of the popular Extreme Justice leader Captain Atom, entirely drawn by the legendary Steve Ditko, that's why! A super-desirable and overlooked key Silver Age book.

• ***The Spectre*** (DC). The 10-issue series from 1967-1969 is super-hot; it's one of the best-selling Silver Age DC titles at the present time. How anyone could avoid attributing this interest to the current series' strong fan base is beyond us.

• ***X-Men*** (Marvel). The original #1, the first app and origin of the original X-Men, moved up to $3,800 this month, as did many issues from this key/hot series.

THE GOLDEN AGE MARKET (1938-54)

The GA market is still blistering hot, with dealers and collectors competing with one another for the miniscule supply. "The [Golden Age] market is the most nuts I've seen it in my 11 years in the business," says Tim Cottrill of The Bookery in Fairborn, Ohio. According to Tim, at the recent Detroit show, dealers were frantically buying from one another, marking up prices and reselling to yet other dealers, all of whom were hoping to have the right book at the right time when the right collector came along. The competition for Timelys, DCs and other superhero Golden Age material is fierce, with no end in sight.

Be watching *Wizard*'s Price Guide pages for exciting new developments in our coverage of the Golden Age market. You're going to love what you see.

That's all for this month, Market Watchers. Until next month, keep snatching, grabbing, spending wisely...and reading! ☆

Jon Warren and Marc Wilkofsky are both swell fellows. But Wilko's got a nicer butt.

up enough cents to buy the old ones.

Therefore, I ask that publishers concentrate more of their resources on the *quality* of writing and art in their books, and less on the materials themselves. I am only one of many who would enjoy the opportunity to read more comics than to be dazzled by extra-thick paper and eye-catching computer-processed colors.

Trace Shelton
College Station, TX

Trace, if there's one reader out there who doesn't concur with the basis of your letter—that comics are too damn expensive these days—I give you permission to storm his mansion and yell his ears off. I admit that years ago, I personally used to like across-the-board cover price increases, 'cause you usually got the "more story and art" bonus, which made comics even cooler than they already were for me. Then everything changed. Now we're paying more for better formats, "Our cover's brighter!"-type gimmicks and coloring by machines instead of people. And $2.95—a price which almost turned off buyers to the Prestige Format 48-page *Dark Knight* books in 1986—gets you no more than 40 standard format story pages today. Now, before I start saying, "In my day...," onto the next letter...

Dear Market Watchers,

I'd like to tell you that I buy twice as many back issues as I do new comics off the rack. Why? Because the old books are better reading material. It seems like every time I buy a new comic, it's right in the middle of some story arc. Besides, I don't like dishin' out $1.50 to $2.00 for a comic that's not going to rise in value for about two or three years. Older back issues go up more frequently, and often start out cheaper than $2.

Also, what's up with Shatterstar's first appearance? In all my *Wizards*, it's been listed as *New Mutants* #99. But when I was flipping through the latest Price Guide, I noticed his first appearance was listed as *Inhumans* #3, and he dies in #5, both published in 1976. What's going on? Thanks.

Matt Madia
Pittsburgh, PA

Yeah, that story arc problem rubs a lot of readers the wrong way. During one of these arcs, it takes a good writer to pull a reader in and hold him or her for about 22 pages without producing a tinge of confusion or irritation. And to answer your question, the Shatterstar from *Inhumans* isn't even *related* to the X-Force Shatterstart!

And on a lighter note, this next guy happened upon one interesting back issue recently, without shelling out a dime...

Dear Market Watchers,

My dad's 53 years old, and when he was a kid, he and my two uncles bought pantloads of 10- and 15-cent comics. They bought the stuff I consider mindless drivel, such as *Disney's Comics & Stories* and *Sad Sack*. My grandma packed them away until 45 years later, when my grandpa mentioned to me that there were boxes and boxes in their basement. There were also stacks of '60s *Playboys* and *Hot Rod* magazines. I put all the comics and stacks of *Playboys* into my Ford Bronco and sped home. I looked through them all (about *700* comics) and found a comic that made my pancreas dance. Only one problem—it had NO COVER! So please tell me, oh wise one, how much is a coverless *Showcase* #6 (1956) worth? It's in pretty good shape otherwise. Thanks.

Brian Richter
Glen Ullin, ND

This one's tough for me to answer—not because I don't know the value, though; it's just going to break your pancreas—uh, heart. The general retailer rule-of-thumb is that a coverless version of a Near Mint book is worth *one percent* of the Near Mint value. Sounds like the rest of your copy of this Challengers of the Unknown intro book is in NM, so since the regular NM value is currently $2,850, it's worth a whopping...$28.50. Real sorry, Brian—I suggest you don't tell your grandfather about this (or the *Playboys*).

Wow, what a column—I'm speechless. Thank you all for writing, and look for a few more letters on this topic, everyone—I've only grazed the pile! See you in 30, and best of luck in that mad collecting world out there.

—Marc Wilkofsky
"Franken-Grunge"

Hey, Market Watchers! Send your letters to:
MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

SHOWS & CONVENTIONS

These listings are as accurate as we can get 'em, but *Wizard* always recommends phoning ahead before you attend an event—show information sometimes changes after we go to press. With that in mind, it's time for all you comic-hungry hordes to go conventioneering!

CALIFORNIA

JULY 2, 16 & AUGUST 13, 27, VAN NUYS

Valley's Largest Comic & Card Show, Best Western-Airtel Plaza Hotel, 16201 Sherman Way (1/2 mile west of 405 Frwy.—exit Sherman Way West), 90 tables @ $45-60 each, $1 admission, free with this ad, 10am-4pm. Contact: EB's Sportscard & Comic Book Shows—Eric Beckerman @ 310-478-9818.

JULY 9 & AUGUST 20, LOS ANGELES

West L.A.'s Biggest Show, L.A. Airport Marina Hotel, 8601 Lincoln Blvd. (3 miles west of 405 Frwy.—exit Manchester on the corner of Lincoln & Manchester), 100 tables @ $40-$60 each, $1 admission, free with this ad, 10am-4pm. Contact: Eric Beckerman @ 310-478-9818.

JULY 16, SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Cathedral Hill Hotel, 1101 Van Ness Avenue, Geary Blvd., 50 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

JULY 23, SAN MATEO

San Mateo Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Dynfey Hotel, 1770 South Amphlett Blvd. (Highway 92 @ Highway 101), 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

JULY 30, SAN JOSE

San Jose Sports Card & Comic Book Show, Le Baron Hotel, 1350 North First Street, 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Contact: Al Jang or Damon Jang @ 415-386-9036.

AUGUST 6, EXETER

Exeter Sportscard & Comic Book Show, Exeter Memorial Building, 324 North Kaweah, 35 tables, call for table fees, $1 admission, free for children under 5, 10am-4pm. POG TOURNAMENT HELD ALL DAY!! Contact: Richard Womack @ 209-564-3934.

DELAWARE

JULY 23, DOVER

Super-Con, Sheraton Inn and Conference Center, Rt. 13 South (next to Wal-Mart), 55 tables @ $60 each, $3 admission (mention this *Wizard* ad for $1 off), 10am-4:30pm. 5 free comic books, plus posters and promo cards to the first 100 people with paid admission, 3 door prize drawings every hour. Thousands of comics from the Golden Age to present day will be sold, bought and traded with dealers from 4 states. Also, non-sports cards, gaming cards, toys, action figures, videos and original artwork will be for sale, too. Special guests to be announced. Contact: Derek Woywood of Collectors Comics @ 609-782-0817.

FLORIDA

JULY 23, ORLANDO

Orlando Comic Book MEGA-SHOW, Marriott Hotel, 8001 International Drive (I-4, Sand Lake Rd. exit), 60 tables, $3 admission, 10am-5pm. Special guest signers include: Adam Hughes (artist of *Ghost*) and Brian Stelfreeze (cover artist for *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*). Autograph certificates available, thousands of the hottest comic books and non-sports cards, new and old, drawings for great door prizes. Contact: Skyline Promotions @ 407-426-7745.

INDIANA

JULY 22, FT. WAYNE

Summit City Comic Con, Ramada Inn, Illinois Rd., I-69 exit 105A, 25 tables @ $40 each or $30 if paid by 7/17, $2 admission, adults over 55 and children under 6 are free, also free with a new toy donation at the door for "Toys for Children of Needy Veterans Families" (sponsored by Voiture 80/4, American Legion #82 and AmVets 33), 10am-4pm. Guests: DC/Milestone—Arvell Jones (*Kobalt*), Rak Graphics—Robert Kraus (*Chakan, The Forever Man*), Paradox Press—Jeff Newman (*The Big Book of Conspiracies*), Comico—Willie Peppers (*Strikeforce America*), Pyramid Publications and 5th Panel Comics. Contact: Ronald Imel—D & R Comics @ 219-471-1722.

AUGUST 18-20, INDIANAPOLIS

Indy-Monthly Comic Show, Eastgate Mall, 7150 E. Washington St., 35-plus 8-ft. dealer tables @ $60 each or 2 for $95, free admission, mall hours (Friday-Saturday: 10am-9pm; Sunday: Noon-5pm). *Magic* Tournament August 19th only. For dealer and show information, call Rick Garcia of Hoosier Sportscards @ 317-357-9999.

KENTUCKY

JULY 23, ASHLAND

River Cities Comic Con, Elk's Hall, 900 Carter Avenue (9th & Carter—downtown Ashland), 26 8 ft. tables @ $40 each or 3 for $100, $2 admission (children 6 and under free), 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

MARYLAND

JULY 9, TIMONIUM

Comics, Non-sports cards, POGs and Toys Convention, Holiday Inn Timonium, 2004 Greenspring Drive, take 695 to I83N, exit 16, right at the light, 22 tables @ $45 each, $2 admission, 11am-4pm. For information, contact: Fred Edeson @ 410-252-4324.

JULY 23, GAITHERSBURG

Capital Associates' Gaithersburg Monthly, Gaithersburg Holiday Inn, 2 Montgomery Village Avenue, (301) 948-8900, take exit 11 off I-270 (Rt. 124 East), 60 tables @ $65 for the 1st table, $60 for the 2nd table, $55 for each additional table, $2 admission (may be higher for dates where autographs are added), children under 5 free, 10am-4pm. Guests: Dan Parsons, Daniel Romano and Ray Pearson. Contact: Jeffrey Scott Rocen @ 800-222-2057.

MASSACHUSETTS

JULY 16, ROCKLAND

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic, Toy and Non-Sport Card Show, Ramada Inn, exit 14, Rt. 228, off of Rt. 3 south of Boston, tables available, $2 admission, 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, original art, POGs, and thousands of half-price and hard-to-find comics, free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

JULY 23, NATICK

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic, Toy and Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza, Rt. 9 East, across from the Natick Mall, tables available, $2 admission, 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, POGs, and thousands of half-price and hard-to-find comics, free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

JULY 30, BURLINGTON

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic, Toy and Non-Sport Card Show, VFW Hall, exit 34, Winn street, next to Marshall Simmons Jr. High, tables available, $2 admission, 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, POGs, and thousands of half-price and hard-to-find comics, free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

JULY 9, NASHUA

BIG CAT Productions Monthly Comic, Toy and Non-Sport Card Show, Holiday Inn, exit 4 off Rt. 3, tables available, $2 admission, 11am-4pm. *Magic* cards, toys, POGs, and thousands of half-price and hard-to-find comics, free credit raffles and gifts. Contact: Larry Harrison @ 617-596-3336.

NEW JERSEY

JULY 8, WOODBRIDGE

Comic Book Marketplace, The Sheraton Hotel, 515 Rt. 1 south, across from the Woodbridge Mall, 40 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures* and *Punisher War Zone*), and John Workman (*X-Files*, *Mr. Hero* and *Roma*). Plus $100 in show cash door prizes, and also some surprise guests!!! Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

JULY 22-23, FLEMINGTON

World of Comics & Cards, The Flemington Mall (on Rt. 202 South, just a few miles south of the Somerville Circle), 80 tables @ $110 each, free admission, Sat.—11am-5pm, Sun.—10am-9pm. Comic books, sports & non-sports cards, POGs, *Magic: The Gathering*, supplies, toys and more! Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955 or Tony Grimando @ 908-968-3886.

JULY 23, WAYNE

Wayne Comic Book Expo, Holiday Inn, Rt. 46 East Service Rd., 30 8-ft. tables @ $55 each, $2 admission, 10am-4pm. Special features: primarily comic books (all eras and prices), some non-sports cards and toys, hourly door prizes, old-fashioned no-minimum-bid auctions. Show us your *Wizard* magazine for a $2 merchandise credit with your paid admission. Contact: B. Brzezinska @ 201-783-0608.

JULY 30, FREEHOLD

Comic Book Marketplace, The Freehold Gardens Hotel on Rt. 537 West (West Main St.) off Rt. 9 or

Rt. 33, 50 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Mark McKenna (*Spartan: Warrior Spirit, Power Rangers* movie & *Wolverine Annual*) and Jack C. Harris (*Batman: Castle of the Bat, Power Rangers & Superhuman Samurai Sybersquad*). Plus $100 in show cash door prizes. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

NEW YORK

AUGUST 13, BUFFALO

The Comic Book Show, Marriott Hotel, 1340 Millersport Hwy., take Rt. 90 to exit 50, Rt. 290 to exit 5B, 43 tables @ $70 each, $2.50 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: Ken Lashley (*Excalibur*), Rick Arthur (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*), John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*), Eddy Newell (*Black Lightning*), Tony Isabella (*Black Lightning*), Joe Monks (*Cry for Dawn*), Martin Egeland (*Aquaman*), Tom and Mary Bierbaum (*Legion of Super-Heroes, Star*), door prizes, free promo cards, auction to benefit Hospice, small press room, *MAGIC* tournament. Special appearance by the Organized Readers of Comics Association and COMX-TV. For information, contact: Phil Conley @ 716-282-1236.

SEPTEMBER 2-3, WHITE PLAINS

PowerCon IV, Westchester County Center, Bronx River Pkwy. @ Central Avenue, 250 tables @ $125 each, $7.50 admission, 11am-5pm each day. Over 25 guests, including Joe Sinnott, Paul Abrams, June Brigman and many more! Contact: Ted or Rosary @ 716-893-5301.

NORTH CAROLINA

JULY 9, CHARLOTTE

Comic Book Trading Card & *Star Wars* Toy Show, Ramada Inn Airport Central, Exit 7 off I-77 (515 Clanton Rd.), 30 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Comic book-related toys and more!!! Contact: Mark @ 704-787-3911 or 704-249-6571.

JULY 15, WINSTON-SALEM

Comic Book Trading Card & *Star Wars* Toy Show, Holiday Inn West, (off Silas Crook Pkwy., Hawthorne Rd.) 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Comic book-related toys and more!!! Contact: Mark @ 704-787-3911 or 704-249-6571.

JULY 23, GREENSBORO

Comic Book Trading Card & *Star Wars* Toy Show, Howard Johnson Coliseum (Exit 217B off I-40), 35 tables @ $50 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Comic book-related toys and more!!! Contact: Mark @ 704-787-3911 or 704-249-6571.

OHIO

AUGUST 6, AKRON

Akron-Canton Comic Con, Holiday Inn, I-77 at exit 120 (Arlington Rd.), 41 6-ft. tables @ $60 each, $3 admission (children 6 and under free), 10am-4pm. Guests: Steven Butler (artist, *Web of Spider-Man* and *Silver Sable*), Mitch Byrd (artist, *Guy Gardner, Dinosaurs for Hire* and more) and Samantha Lovelace. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056.

PENNSYLVANIA

JULY 9, CHADDS FORD

Comic Book Marketplace, Ramada Inn, 1110 Baltimore Pike, at Rt. 1 & 202, 30 tables @ $55 each, $3 admission, 10am-4pm. Guests: John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures* and *Punisher War Zone*), Christopher Taylor (*Blood Pack* and *Legion of Super-Heroes*), and Dan Hu[illegible] (*Aquaman, The Little Mermaid* and *Superman*). Plus $100 in show cash door prizes. Contact: Ron Jordan @ 908-828-5955.

CANCELLED

JULY 15, PHILADELPHIA

Super-Con, Holiday Inn Express, 13th and Walnut Streets (only 3 blocks from the new Philadelphia Convention Center), 55 tables @ $60 for 1, $110 for 2 and $150 for 3, $4 admission (mention this *Wizard* ad for $1 off), 10am-5pm. 4 free comic books given to the first 500 people with paid admission! Plus, posters and promo cards, courtesy of most comic book publishers. Over $1,000 in door prize giveaways throughout the day, with 5 drawings every hour. Dealers from six states buying, selling and trading thousands of comics from the Golden Age to the present day. Also on sale will be non-sports cards, *Magic: The Gathering* cards, limited-edition *Rage* cards, limited-edition *Hyborian Gates* cards, plus other gaming cards. POGs, toys and figures, *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* merchandise, original artwork, and videos will be in abundance, too. Our guests include Paris Cullins (Marvel and DC Comics artist), John Hebert (*X-Men Adventures*), Aaron McClellan (*Gene Rodenberry's Lost Universe, Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*) and Rick Parker (*Beavis and Butt-Head*). More guests and publishers to be announced. Call for the current guest list. Contact: Derek Woywood of Collectors Comics @ 609-782-0817.

JULY 29, LANGHORNE

Comics & Cards, Sheraton Books County, 400 Oxford Valley Road, 55 tables @ $40 each, $1 admission, 9am-3pm. Contact: Greg Petrino @ 215-968-8577.

TENNESSEE

JULY 8, KNOXVILLE

Summer-Con, Holiday Inn, I-75, Merchants Rd. at Central Avenue Pike, 20 tables @ $30 each, $1 admission, 9am-6pm. Hourly door prizes and grand door prize. Contact Steve Riley @ 615-691-3302.

JULY 30, MEMPHIS

Comic World Promotion presents Com-X-Con, Comic book and Non-sports card show and *MAGIC: The GATHERING* Tournament, Holiday Inn, 1441 East Brooks Rd., take I-55 south to exit 5A, 35 6-ft. tables @ $45 each, 2 for $80 or 3 for $100, $2 admission ($5 entry fee for tournament), 10am-5pm. Two classes of play for tournament. Novice Players may use revised cards and the last 2 expansion sets (*Fallen Empires*, or *Ice Age*, if available), Open Players may use all expansion sets. Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place. Drawing at 2pm for valuable comics. For more information, contact: Cecil Johnson @ 501-794-3394 or Richard Maxwell @ 501-834-1157.

TEXAS

JULY 1 & 29, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Hilton SW Hotel, 6780 SW Frwy. exit Hillcroft, 30 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 2 & 30, SAN ANTONIO

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Wyndham Hotel, I-10 and Wurzbach, 40 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 4, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn SW, 11160 SW Frwy. at Beltway 8, 35 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 8, SAN ANTONIO

Comic, Card & POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel (I-10W and 410 W. behind Malibu), 40 tables @ $55 each, $1 admission, 9:30am-4pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 15, HOUSTON

L. King Collectibles, Monthly In-Store Sale-Bration, 3001 Fondren, free admission, 10am-6pm, one free raffle drawing for every $10 purchase, raffle prizes include over $750 worth of comic books, sports and non-sports card boxes and wax packs! Special savings and discounts throughout the store! We offer the lowest everyday prices on *Magic: TG, Star Trek* and other gaming cards, *Wizard* Top Ten Comics, sports and non-sports cards, supplies and more! Free comic book with this ad! Call 713-782-2273 for more information.

JULY 15, LIVE OAK/SAN ANTONIO

Card, Comic & Toy Show, Live Oak Civic Center, Pat Booker Road, 50 8-ft. tables @ $30 each, $1 admission, 10am-6pm. Door prizes every half hour, card or comic pack with each paid admission. Contact: Dale Eckman @ 210-945-0003.

JULY 16, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn Select Park 10 West (I-10 West, Katy Frwy at Hwy. 6), 45 tables @ $70 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 16 & 22, AUSTIN

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Embassy Suites Hotel, 5901 I-H35, 45 tables @ $55 each, $1.50 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

JULY 23, HOUSTON

Comic, Card and POG Convention, Holiday Inn Hobby Airport Hotel, 9100 Gulf Frwy., I-45 S. exit College Airport Rd., 45 tables @ $65 each, $2 admission, 10am-5pm. Door prize drawings every 30 minutes for comics and cards, free pack of comic cards with this ad and paid admission. Contact: Mark Hlavinka @ 713-293-8676.

VIRGINIA

AUGUST 6, TYSONS CORNER/FALLS CHURCH

Capital Associates' Tysons Corner Monthly, Tysons Corner Ramada (Double Tree Hotel—703-893-1340), 7801 Leesburg Pike (Falls Church), take exit 10 off I-495 (Rt. 7 East), 85 tables @ $65 for the 1st table, $60 for the 2nd table, $55 for each additional table, $2 admission (may be higher for dates where autographs are added), children under 5 free, 10am-4pm. Contact: Jeffrey Scott Rocen @ 800-222-2057.

WEST VIRGINIA

AUGUST 13, PARKERSBURG

Parkersburg-Marietta Comic Con, Holiday Inn, I-77 at exit 176 (Rt. 50), 40 6-ft. tables @ $40 each or 3 for $100, $2 admission, children 6 and under free. Contact: Jeff Harper @ 216-499-6056. ☆

If you'd like to use *Wizard's* magic to help advertise your comic book event, call Karen Evora at (914) 268-3907.

Bone to Pick

by Todd McFarlane

I was on the phone the other day with one of the *Wizard* editors and we were talking about Jeff Smith's *Bone* comic joining the ranks of Image Comics. He found it exciting on a couple of levels: he didn't hear a rumor about it happening (there's *always* a rumor before something big becomes fact) and he was surprised that the title landed at Image. He felt that it was incompatible with Image's publishing style. (His first instinct, incidentally, led him to believe that if *Bone* went to any other publisher it would be Dark Horse Comics.)

For those of you unfamiliar with *Bone* (and shame on you if you don't read it), it is said by many to be a modern day "Pogo," which was done by cartoonist Walt Kelly many years ago. Before *Bone*'s comic book debut a couple of years ago, Jeff Smith had been developing the characters that comprise the book's cast for practically his whole life. And it is Jeff's portrayal of these characters—which comes naturally to him—that has garnered him critical and popular acclaim, as well as many awards. And it's amazing that, despite this acclaim, his book is in black and white, something which is almost taboo by today's publishing standards. People want flashy color, and yet *Bone* bucks the odds.

The reason he joined Image Comics, amongst a lot of things, was because of the uncertainty of the comic book business right now. With Marvel Comics going exclusive with its own distributor, Heroes World, and DC Comics going exclusive with Diamond Comics Distributors, it presents a serious situation for small publishers. One such publisher was Jeff Smith's Cartoon Books.

From Jeff's point of view, he had to look at the market and ask himself: If I go to another distributor that isn't associated with one of the big boys, how long will that distributor stay in business? It is now important to be associated with someone that will ultimately stick around for more than just a while.

So, Jeff Smith going to Image doesn't necessarily mean that he loves what we, as a publisher, are doing, but he does recognize the value in tag-teaming with a company that has some clout. Now his book will continue to thrive in the marketplace, which would've been something of a question mark had he continued publishing on his own.

I wish all of the independent small press publishers a lot of luck, as well as to the fans that collect all their books. For the publishers, it's going to be tough to survive, and I admire their resolve to continue in a questionable atmosphere. But all you guys are welcome to come over to Image, because that's what we're all about: a haven for talent. ☆

Todd McFarlane is a co-founder of Image Comics, and is the writer and artist of Spawn.

Violator™ & © Todd McFarlane Productions. Bone™ & © Jeff Smith.

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff or Image Comics.

Wizard Bullpen

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO TOUGH!

Well, it's almost time for another intense challenge of your strength and stamina, brought to you by your contest-crazy, fun-lovin' friends at *Wizard*! Yes, the *Wizard* Scavenger Hunt is hurtling back into these pages very soon—*too* soon for some of you sissy-marys, we'll bet! You ready to track down some weird objects and search for ridiculously insignificant info for a truckload of kick-you-in-the-jeans prizes? Last time we did this thing, we were cool enough to throw some awesome prizes your way—including a freakin' color TV and laser disc player, and more signed comics than you thought existed—and we were thrown for a loop by the mind-numbing response we got (over 300 dedicated fans, who tried to find *everything* on our list)! If you ain't breathing like an elephant in heat yet, get this: the booty we've got goin' for the next Hunt will get yer blood pumpin' and brain fryin' like no other *Wizard* contest before! "*So when's it happening, dammit?*" Hey—don't bite our heads off, chief—our Third Annual Scavenger Hunt is set for issue #50! That's only two months from now, so prepare yourself, and good luck in advance—you might just need it!

GETTING ONLINE WITH BUDDY!

If you've hooked into *Wizard*'s new Wizard World forum on America Online, you have Blastin' Buddy Scalera to thank! He's been the computer-connected coordinator of our new venture into cyberspace, and excitement and stress have been his "keywords" for months now. We asked Buddy how it's been working on WW. "It's cool. After work, I used to read comics and play with online services like America Online. Now, I get paid to do it, on top of free comics and a free subscription to my favorite online services." Yeah, great, Buddy. So what can *Wizard* readers get outta it? "We're trying to tap into *Wizard*'s fan base and bring all the best elements of the magazine into cyberspace. We're also going to have some of the top creators come online to meet with *Wizard* fans." And just to be different from the other magazine systems out there, Buddy notes, "We'll be the first computer forum in the country to raffle off Sandra Bullock. I hear Prodigy's giving away Don Knotts. Shows how much they care about their subscribers." Well, you heard it here, hackers. If you've already got AOL, you can travel to Wizard World by just typing in the Keyword **Wizard**. (Our E-mail address is WizardTGTC@AOL.COM.) If not, just call (800) 225-5591 for a free 10-hour trial of America Online! Tell 'em Buddy sent ya (and see how little you get).

WHO ARE YOU?

STEVE BLACKWELL

Contributing Writer and Graphic Artist, *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*

What is it you do at *Wizard*?
For Wizard Press, I do design work. For *Wizard*, I write the "If You Missed" listings in the Price Guide, help come up with the CBIQ questions, and amaze staff members with ridiculous amounts of TV, movie, music and comic trivia.

Your favorite section in *Wizard*?
Magic Words.

What was your favorite "If You Missed" listing?
The Fantastic Four listing in #45, on page 151—look it up.

What would your biography be called?
A Mütt's Life, or *My Kingdom for an Ümlat*.

Word of advice to *Wizard* readers?
Avoid Editor-in-Chief Pat McCallum like the plague after he eats at Taco Bell.

Favorite TV show?
NYPD Blue.

Favorite musical performers?
Van Halen, and Extreme (Nuno and Ed: the best ax-men in the business).

Who would play you in a movie?
Ray Liotta, or Jeff Fahey.

Person with whom you'd like to star in a film?
Kari Wuhrer, the woman from *Remote Control*, and a fellow Connecticutian.

Favorite comic book series?
Incredible Hulk and *Sin City*.

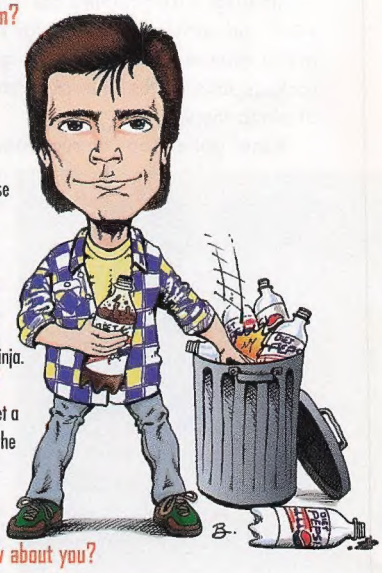
Favorite comic book story of all time?
"The Korvac Saga," in *Avengers* #167-#177, 'cause you get to see Hawkeye kick the Collector's ass.

What are your hobbies?
Drawing, mountain biking and throwing POGs.

Do you have any nicknames?
Helmütt, Mütt, Black-well-_____ (insert word here; like well-groomed, etc.), Sensei and the Irish Ninja.

What superpower would you want, and why?
I kinda like the abilities of the Super-Skrull; you get a value pack of superpowers with them. But wait—the Martian Manhunter's even better—you get super-strength, invisibility, shape-shifting and telepathy; more powers for your Meta-human dollar.

What's the one thing you'd like people to know about you?
I can circumsise a fly with a POG from 30 feet away.



Top 10 Superhero names that haven't been used yet:

10. Mr. It-Hurts-When-I-Pee
9. Major Jesus
8. Bloody Stool
7. Hesitation Man (and his sidekick, Pause)
6. The Love Button
5. Captain Open Wound
4. The Ruptured Pancreas
3. Crusher Dave
2. Rectal Halitosis Boy
1. Keep-Squeezin'-Them-Monkeys Lad

INQUEST #4

"Something for everyone" is the phrase for this issue, headed by a beautiful Angel vs. Fallen Angel cover by TSR artist Robh Ruppel! We've got the definitive, behind-the-scenes article on the ***Star Wars* collectible card game**—everything you wanted to know about this fall's sure-to-be-hot game! We span the history of a card for you *Magic* info cravers, taking you from the conception of an Orgg card (from *Fallen Empires*) to its production and inclusion in a set! There's also an in-depth look into how religion is portrayed in the world of gaming, and a brand-new way to play *Magic*! Plus, we cast ***The Lord of the Rings* movie**! And you want contests? Well, we're giving you a chance to **win a deck of *Chronicles* cards** from *Magic: The Gathering*, with 60 cards selected by *Magic* creator Richard Garfield himself! Or you can score a **leather jacket with original werewolf art**, in our White Wolf/*Rage* contest! It's all topped off with a **free card** from the upcoming WildStorm game! All this for only...**$3.50**

Illustration by Brian Cunningham

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WIZARD Profile

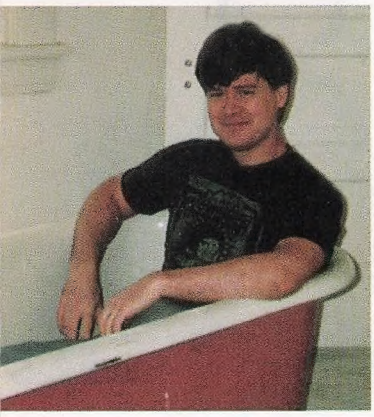
Here's looking at...KARL KESEL

by Marc Shapiro

Karl Kesel, the 36-year-old writer for *The Adventures of Superman, Superboy* and the upcoming *Fantastic Four 2099*, as well as acclaimed inker for various projects, knew that the four color world was for him just about the same time he realized another potential occupation was not. "I got serious about a comic book career when I realized that I couldn't become a veterinarian," he says. "The idea of cutting open animals just didn't do it for me."

Born just outside of Rochester, N.Y., Kesel jokingly recalls that his introduction to comic books, at age 10, was more out of necessity than choice. "My family decided to take a month-long, cross-country car trip. Now, when you're 10 years old, driving in a car for eight hours a day can be pretty damned boring. Thank god they had comic book racks in most of the little Mom and Pop stores we stopped at along the way."

Kesel got serious enough about a career in comics to attend the Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. "But I dropped out after one year because I decided that I wasn't cut out for comics. Then I went to the University of Hartford [in Connecticut] for four more years and discovered that I was cut out for everything [else] a lot less."



With inking on his mind, Kesel moved to New York City and began dropping off samples of his work at Marvel and DC's offices. DC came calling with an inking job on its *New Talent Showcase* book. This followed with a fill-in shot on *Legion of Super-Heroes* #312 and his first regular paycheck, inking *Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes*. These followed in swift fashion with jobs on such titles as *'Mazing Man*, the *Legends* mini-series over John Byrne's pencils, and soon Byrne's *Superman* issues. "Many people thought I had just come out of nowhere. They hadn't realized I had been around for a year and a half and had just been keeping a low profile."

Dubbed "Kesel the Kibitzer" for his barrage of story ideas to DC editors and writers, Kesel finally broke into the writing ranks, alongside his wife Barbara, when their pitch for *Hawk & Dove* was picked up, giving young upstart artist Rob Liefeld his first high-profile penciling assignment. Kesel's first solo scribbling was on *Secret Origins* #49 featuring the Newsboy Legion. "It's no big secret as to why I got into comics," declares Kesel. "I just really liked them. I don't think it went much deeper than that."

Photo courtesy of Barbara Kesel. SUPERBOY ™ & © DC Comics.

First comic read...
It was either [*Uncanny*] *X-Men* #49 or *Silver Surfer* #1.

Favorite comic of all time...
Challengers of the Unknown. There's something so wonderfully basic about that concept.

Favorite work of your own...
Inking, it would be my work on the *World's Finest* [mini-series from 1990]. I'm real proud of that job. I can't really look at anything I've written to this point and say something really stands out.

Person you'd most like to meet...
Milton Caniff [creator of "Steve Canyon" and "Terry and the Pirates"]. He was my idol. I loved his stuff.

Superpower you would most want...
Flying. It would be amazing to get above it all.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
Popcorn drizzled with basil olive oil

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As an adult, my prop replica of a first season *Lost in Space* ray gun. As a kid, I just couldn't get enough of Captain Action [dolls].

Things you collect...
Ray guns and Steve Canyon memorabilia

Person who would play you in a movie about yourself...
Ron Howard

Favorite cartoons...
Johnny Quest and the old Warner Bros. cartoons

Person you'd most like to work with...
Eduardo Barreto

Favorite musical performer...
Liz Phair

Favorite TV show...
Homicide

Last good movie you saw...
The Last Seduction

Last good book you read...
The Mothman Prophecies by John Keel

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
I would be doing a series on great old Marvel monsters and have it sell better than *X-Men*. ☆

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